

BANDWAGON

**THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

MAY - JUNE 2004



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FRED D. PFENING, JR. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor

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THE FRONT COVER

Baby Jennie was a special member of the Carson & Barnes Circus family. The five year old Asian female elephant was born in Hugo, Oklahoma and appeared in the performance in recent years. She was very talented and was featured as a single act, not with adult elephants in the performance.

Jennie was the first successful live birth at the Endangered Ark Foundation in 1998. The Ark was established by the Miller-Byrd family in 1993.

Jennie died at her home in Hugo on Monday April 12, 2004 after a valiant attempt to save her life after contracting the devastating illness of elephant herpes virus.

The cover photograph was taken by John Polacsek.

THE BACK COVER

This is the back cover of the courier used by the Coop & Lent Railroad Circus in 1916. Pfening Archives

NEW MEMBERS

Lawrence Mark Jackson 4371
P. O. Box 186
Bngalow, NSW, 2479 Australia

Kim Cool 4372
312 Shore Dr.
Venice, FL 34285

Peta Tait 4373
LaTrobe Univ. Theater/Drama Prog.
Melbourne, Vict 3086 Australia

Carol Brendler 4374
9913 Forestview Dr.
Molena, IL 60448-7766

John R. Harger 4375
300 N. 2nd St. #8
Ozark, AR 72949-2854

James D. Ivy 4376
851 Wiltshire Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78209-2848

CHS CONVENTION PAPERS

All CHS members are invited to present a paper at the 2004 convention. Please contact President Al Stencell if you wish to be on the program.

DUES NOTICES

The CHS dues and subscription notices for 2004 were mailed in May. Please send your dues or subscription check at once. The July-August

Bandwagon will not be mailed to those who have not made payment. by July 20.

BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON

1966-Jan.-Feb.
1967-Nov.-Dec.
1968-All but Jan.-Feb.
1969-July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1971-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1972-All available.
1973-All but Nov.-Dec.
1974-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1975-All available.
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.
1978-All available.
1979-All but Jan.-Feb.
1980-1986-All available.
1987-All but Nov.-Dec.
1988-2004-All available.

In addition to above many other issues are available going back to the 1950s. If you are in need of early issues write to the Editor.

Price is \$4.00 each. Add \$2.00 postage for one issue, \$5.00 for more than one issue. Please select substitutes in case we are out of any of above.

BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES
2515 DORSET RD.
COLUMBUS, OH 43221

I am writing a book called "Circus Bodies" (Routledge forthcoming mid-2005) which is about key acts in aerial performance after 1860, and the book has photographs of the following aerialists.

Fay Alexander
Antoinette Concello
Alfredo and Lalo Codona, Vera
Bruce (possibly for cover)
Kenneth Anderson
Luisita Leers
Edythe Siegrist Troupe Poster
The Corsimars (I need information on this duo)
Butterfly ballet by Barquette

If you have any queries please contact Associate Professor Peta Tait, LaTrobe University P. Tait@latrobe.edu.au, or c/o Theatre and Drama, La Trobe University, Bundoora, 3086, Australia.

A Kansas City Circus Wagon Saga

By Fred Dahlinger, Jr.

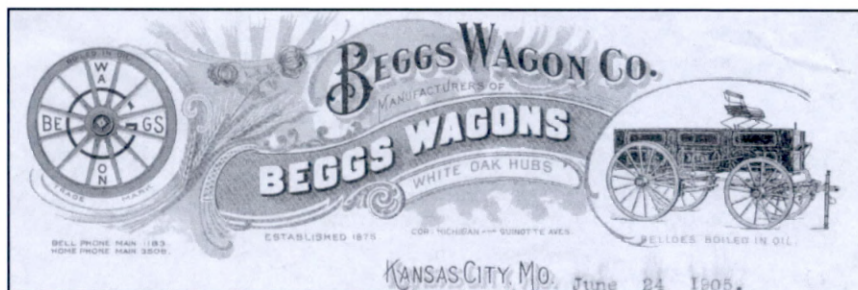
Foreword

J. W. "Bill" Beggs, Sr. (1889-1982) was a kindly gentleman who readily shared knowledge of his family's wagon making heritage. He exchanged correspondence with circus historian George L. Chindahl and published a significant article about his family's enterprise in a 1948 issue of *Bandwagon*. Specific Beggs vehicle knowledge was fostered by Bill's sale of dozens of prints showing a great variety of show wagons and related vehicles that his family had fabricated from the 1890s to the 1920s. Bill attended the 1971 Circus Historical Society convention in Milwaukee, thereby adding a personal connection to events that took place seven decades before. His daughter, Sherie Murphy, recently made available a significant amount of additional information relating to her family and their work, and thereby has facilitated an even greater understanding and appreciation of the Beggs operation and their contributions to circus history.

Beggs Wagon Company

The Beggs family came to America

The F. J. Taylor Circus wagons rolled out of the doors of this modest factory that Sam and Will Beggs operated in Creston, Iowa. Photograph courtesy of Sherie Beggs.



from the Protestant portion of Northern Ireland.¹ They were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, staunch Christians that believed in diligent work during the week and devoted worship on Sunday. Other than recalling that the matriarch was a Murphy, their names were forgotten by the family. They lived their entire lives in Rockbridge County, near Natural Bridge, Virginia. Their children included several boys.

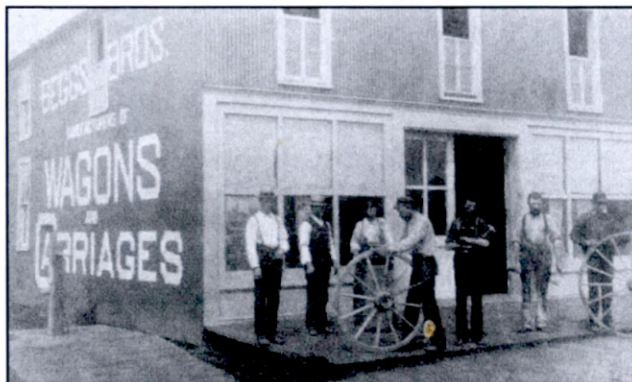
One of their sons, James Murphy Beggs (1818-1892), learned the trade of wagon construction and repair. He worked in the carriage business in Cincinnati in the 1850s according to one report.

On a trip west to Greensburg, Indiana, where some of his brothers had relocated, he met Tamar Porter (1833-1898). Reportedly her father had been a wagon maker in Cleveland, Ohio. They married in 1855 and moved west, floating down the Ohio River to Cairo, Illinois, then heading up the Mississippi and the

A typical Beggs farm wagon was illustrated on this letterhead used in 1905, wherein company founder Samuel M. Beggs offered his Carrollton, Missouri property for use as a circus lot to William P. Hall. Wm. P. Hall Papers, Circus World Museum.


Missouri river, to St. Joseph, Missouri, where Beggs had an uncle on his Murphy side at nearby Savannah. They settled on a farm with a stand of timber in Jackson Township, between Stanberry and King City, Gentry County, Missouri, residing there until moving into the community of Stanberry in 1886. Beggs worked the farm, wagon work and general woodworking, including cabinetry, supplementing his income.

The small cage illustrated in this Beggs ad from 1908 looked like those that had been built as early as the 1870s for overland circus use. Dozens were built through the years by a variety of wagon fabricators.



BEGGS CIRCUS WAGONS

For All Purposes in the Show Business



Tell us what you want; give specifications as near as possible and get our prices.

• You can have good and

ATTRACTIVE CAGES

AND ALL OTHER WAGONS

If You Buy Them From

BEGGS WAGON CO.

Manufacturers,
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI.

"Made a little better than seems necessary"



Master wagon maker S. M. Beggs is seated at his desk in this February 1909 view of the plant office. Beggs salesman Mr. Prine and superintendent O. B. Hannson were also captured in the exposure. Photograph courtesy Sherie Murphy.

They raised a family of four sons and two daughters, another daughter dying in infancy. The oldest son, John A. Beggs (1857-1935) worked on the farm with his father. He was likely to inherit it outright by virtue of his first-born status, but after their marriage he and his wife moved to Nebraska. The youngest son, Charles G. Beggs (1871?-1943), also labored on the farm but later relocated to Colorado and then Oregon.

Samuel M. "Sam" Beggs (1859-1928), the second oldest son, attended the local school and eventually studied at a commercial college in Quincy, Illinois. On Saturdays he learned decorative techniques in a local carriage shop, like Al Ringling becoming a "carriage trimmer." The name of his employer is unknown, but one Quincy carriage maker, the E. M. Miller Company, had manufactured circus wagons for Yankee Robinson in 1868 and W. W. Cole in 1871, not too many years before Beggs was in living in the community. He was back home in Gentry County at the time of the 1880 census, when his profession was given as wagon maker. Family lore and later Beggs publications dated the start of the wagon building business as 1875. The date might have represented the earliest such efforts by Sam at home on the farm, while still a lad of 16 or 17. He essentially served as an

apprentice to his father, who taught him well. His second son status probably caused him to establish his own independent business in nearby King City, Missouri by 1881. Samuel Beggs met and married Lilly Blythe Woodside (1869-1926) in

that community.

James W. "Will" Beggs (1865-1949), the third-oldest son, learned the wagon trade from his father but also attended the Stan-berry Normal School and learned business administration. He was eventually in partnership with brother Sam at the King City location and elsewhere, selling out and marrying Margaret Wehn. Both events took place in 1899. Thereafter Will relocated to Hannibal, Missouri and had a wagon factory there. They moved to Colorado and then Nebraska, where he raised sugar beets and potatoes before becoming a banker in 1911, chartering his own bank in Whiting, Iowa in 1916 and managing the business there for three decades.

The Beggs shop output soon outgrew the prospects within the King City locale and by 1889 the firm relocated across the state line to Creston, Iowa. King City was accessible only by roads, whereas Creston was on the Burlington railroad and presented an opportunity for shipments elsewhere. The business was styled Beggs Bros., for Sam and Will. There

were at least four employees at one time, as documented in an early photograph. It was in Creston where J. W. Beggs, Sam and Lilly's son, arrived on November 4, 1889. Though born in Iowa, Bill preferred reference to his Missouri heritage. He was named for Samuel's younger brother and partner, James W. The boy was called "Bill" to avoid confusion with his uncle, later becoming "J. W." in the same way that his father was known as "S. M.," a communication style of the time. J. W. Beggs became "Sr." after the birth of his own son, J. W. Beggs, Jr., on December 9, 1920.

Sam and Will did their first circus work in Creston, fabricating wagons that were an extension of their farm vehicle designs. Surviving photographs document a combination ticket and baggage wagon as well as an advance wagon reportedly built for F. J. Taylor's overland circus of 1890. They must have been replacements for the first bill wagon and other vehicles that were shipped to Creston from Chicago for Taylor's 1886 circus.² A circa 1906 Beggs farm wagon catalog stated they had twenty years experience in building show wagons. The statement may have been an approximation, as we have found no documentation for any other show work prior to the Taylor items. It's possible that an entire fleet of wagons was fabricated for

The Beggs factory in Kansas City was a substantial brick structure. Parked in front of it in the spring of 1908 were six small cages that were fabricated for Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson outfit. Photograph courtesy Sherie Murphy.



Taylor, who was essentially starting anew after his first failure. Frank J. Taylor (-1917) himself had not arrived in Creston until 1879 and no doubt relied upon the hometown wagon maker when framing his second circus venture for 1890. Taylor had learned his lesson and realized that the Beggs prices were more economical than those from the big city builders, while being equally or even more durable. It was also likely that the Beggs brothers were enamored of the idea of dealing with a showman who would travel around the adjoining states, exhibiting their handiwork. At the time, horses and wagons were examined at the traveling circus in the same way that automobiles are inspected at an auto show today. In later years the Creston shop building housed Mose Hurst's Creston Iron and Metal scrap operation.

About 1893 Sam and Will Beggs moved back to Missouri, to Carrollton, about 60 miles northeast of Kansas City. It offered better access to the large stocks of oak and hickory that were needed for wagon manufacture. Carrollton was also a county seat and situated on three railroad lines, offering improved shipping opportunities. Additional transportation connections were necessary to sustain the firm's pattern of continued growth. The brothers were shipping carloads of farm and freight wagons throughout the Midwest, as well as to Colorado, Oklahoma and

The only time that the Hannibal Wagon Co. advertised for show wagon business was via this piece in the May 16, 1914 issue of *Billboard*.

the Dakotas.

A plot of land was bought adjacent to the Santa Fe railroad line, east of South Main hill. A resident recalled that the Beggs factory was a large wooden-framed building in the southeastern part of the city, on the east side of Kinsey Street. It was east of the Shanklin pasture, a site known as the "old circus ground," an arrangement that surely brought joy to the Beggs brothers and their employees on "Circus Day." The steam-powered plant housed a wood shop, blacksmith shop, tire shop, bed shop, paint shop, display sheds, a loading dock and an office. The wood shop alone was a place of fascination, filled with specialized machine tools, all belt driven, to accomplish the wide variety of tasks necessary to shape cured lumber into useful parts. It was a fully integrated shop, with the painters even mixing their own applications from raw materials.

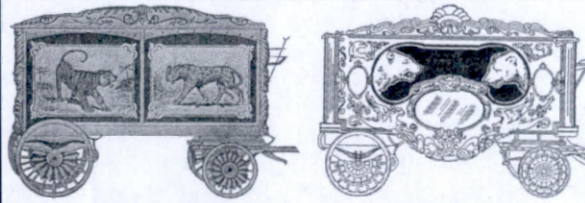
Beggs continued to make carriages and wagons that were required for local commerce and increasing shipments outside the county. No circus wagon orders can be identified during their tenure in Carrollton, but it's likely that they made some for overland showmen in the vicinity. Will sold his interest in the concern to Samuel in 1899, choosing to pursue



Beggs took great pride in their wheel manufacture, fabricating all of them in their own shop with specialized, wood-working machinery. This is the south end of the wheel shop in February 1909. Photograph courtesy Sherie Murphy.

his own manufacturing business in Hannibal, Missouri. More hard work and prudent management brought success, to the point that the Carrollton facility was outgrown by 1903. Improved resources and broader transportation of the company's products were also needed. Beggs went to Kansas City, scouting it as a possible future home for an even larger wagon factory. As a growing center of railroad-based commerce situated on the Mississippi River and surrounded by agriculture and livestock, the city would finally pro-

The Beggs "sunburst" wheel was a carved plate affixed to the exterior surface of the wheel spokes, as illustrated in their circa 1914 catalog. Beggs utilized both wooden and metal Sarven hubs on their show wagon wheels.

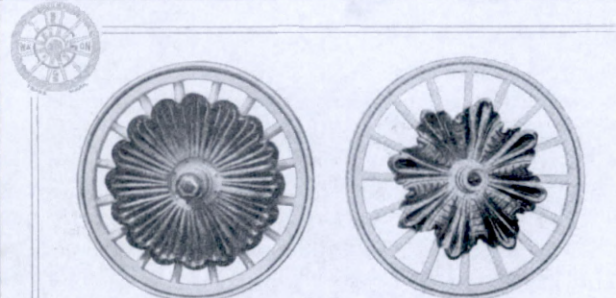


HANNIBAL WAGON CO.

The World's Largest Builders of Circus and Carnival Wagon
See Wagons We Built for The World at Home.

Correspondence Solicited. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

— ADDRESS —
HANNIBAL WAGON CO.
HANNIBAL, MISSOURI.



Sunbursts and Carving

All sizes of Sunbursts on short notice. Nicely carved. Furnished in the white or completely painted ready to put on. In asking for prices, state height of wheel, diameter of hub and number of spokes.

WOOD CARVING OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS. Scrolls and images. Give dimensions of space you wish covered and your ideas as to decoration.

vide a permanent home for the progressive vehicle manufacturer. In the first two decades of the 20th century, Kansas City, Missouri also developed into the hub of traveling show activity for the Great Plains states. A move to Kansas City brought Beggs into closer contact with many showmen who would have need for his company's wagons. Already in the 1890s Frank V. Lemen quartered his Lemen Bros. circus in Dodson, Missouri, just a few miles outside of town. A number of carnival operators were also in the vicinity, including C. W. Parker in Abilene and James A. Patterson in Paola. Kansas City was also a favored home for a number of repertoire theater troupes. The city's resources were utilized and nurtured by the many active members of the Heart of America Showmen's Club, headquartered at the Coates House hotel. Any number of suppliers to the business, from tent maker Baker-Lockwood to candy box seller Gordon-Howard and the National Calliope Company eventually found the city to be a geographically advantageous location for their enterprises.

Beggs visited Kansas City frequently in 1903, with a vision to relocate his plant to the large city. By the summer he purchased a plot of land situated on the Missouri Pacific Railroad in the city's East Bottoms locale. Meetings were held with the local manufacturers association, presumably working towards some type of incentive to support the relocation of what was stated to be a 200 job manufacturing plant. Beggs planned to invest a considerable amount of money in the new factory, with the estimated size for the two-story masonry and stone structure ranging from 100 x 300 to a more modest 32 x 80. It was partitioned into three sections by thick brick walls, so as to stop the progress of any fire that might take place. Work was rapidly completed on the building at the corner of Guinotte and Michigan, with occupancy taking place shortly after New Year's Day 1904. In addition to the primary factory, Beggs also erected a nearby structure for the multi-year curing of the large stock of



Most wagon builders turned to truck bodywork when horse drawn conveyances were being abandoned. Beggs did the same and turned out some nice calliope trucks, like this one for Murphy Bros. Shows in 1920. J. W. Beggs, Sr. photograph.

white oak and hickory that was consumed in the work. While in Kansas City the business prospered and the Beggs Wagon Company grew into a substantial, regional vehicle manufacturer. They established representative agents in cities like Omaha, distributing their well-crafted farm and freight wagons across the Plains states. They also fabricated vehicles that were of commercial use in a large community, such as ice wagons.

Despite the relocation, Beggs retained ownership of his Carrollton property. In 1905 he contacted William P. Hall and offered to rent the land to him for a July 1 appearance of the Great William P. Hall Shows. The lot fee was a minimal \$15.00. The Beggs Wagon Factory lot, as it was known, measured 250 by 600 feet and had a siding connected to the Santa Fe Railroad running onto it. The same offer was probably tendered to other showmen that planned to visit the community, perhaps with an eye to encourage orders for Beggs vehicles.³

Beggs primarily manufactured a full line of farm and commercial duty wagons, circus and general show vehicles being only a fraction of their total output.⁴ In 1908 it was boasted that 40 to 50 men labored in their well-equipped shop, a single, large, two-story brick structure that covered one and a half city blocks. It can be seen in the background of many of the Beggs wagon photographs. Business was so good that during the

Panic of 1907 they stated that extra men were hired to turn out orders on time.⁵ Beggs managed his business along modern lines, using catchy slogans to promote their brand. By 1906 their advertising proclaimed that Beggs wagons were "Made a little better than seems necessary." By 1913 they advertised themselves as "The Circus Wagon Builders" in the *Billboard*, apparently to differentiate themselves from commercial firms that were unwilling to tackle the complexities and peculiarities of show vehicles.⁶

Sam and his son, J. W. Beggs, and two other presumed family members, Ira J. and Ralph Beggs, all resided at 2412 Mercer in Kansas City when the 1904 Kansas City directory was compiled. The Beggs Wagon Company was listed the following year, located at the northeast corner of Guinotte and Michigan Avenues. Samuel was the President and General Manager, youngest son Charles G. Beggs was Secretary and J. W. Beggs was also listed working there. Charles relocated to Greeley, Colorado by 1907, when William R. Painter, a Carrollton resident, was listed as Vice President. John T. Morris came on as Secretary in 1910 and was replaced in that role by J. W. Beggs in 1911. He was just finishing school at the time. Samuel had remained as President all the time, taking on the additional title of Treasurer in 1917.

Beggs is well known today for the catalog of circus and show wagons that was published and distributed between 1912 and 1915, according to Bill Beggs.⁷ The publication can actually date no earlier than 1914, the year that the Tangley Calliope mentioned in it was first introduced and wagons made for the Irwin Bros. Wild West. The catalog was specifically noted as being available in the *Billboard*, January 15, 1916 (page 29). It was a rather late date at which to advertise for any wagon work, but perhaps Beggs was hoping to garner the orders that other firms were no longer willing to accept. It was actually a pretty perceptive move at the time and the firm

was favored with a variety of show wagon orders.

Spurred by the surplus of trucks available at the conclusion of World War I, American business rapidly transformed itself from horse to internal combustion engine powered transportation. A strategic change in the Beggs business was acknowledged with the commencement of automobile manufacture in October 1917. Sam formalized the progressive action with a change of the firm name to the Beggs Motor Car Company in 1918. They manufactured the "Beggs Six" Motor Car in an expanded wagon shop, buying most of the components and acting as an assembly plant. Their first car, the earliest "made" in Kansas City, was displayed in February 1918 at 1713 McGee, outside of the scheduled auto show in the local Convention Hall. Sam Beggs retained the top office, but by 1919 G. C. DeLooze joined as Vice President, presumably because of his expert knowledge in automobile design and manufacture. E. R. Sandusky became Treasurer while J. W. Beggs remained the Secretary. Bill recalled later that he spent the majority of his time in the Detroit and Toledo area, expediting parts for their cars. They sold every car that they could assemble, shipping some to the west coast.

Beggs established the Beggs Truck Sales Company in 1919, located at 1713-1715 McGee Street (southeast corner with 17th Street), but it lasted only a year. At one time they sold the Gramm-Bernstein solid rubber tire truck. Another sales or showroom was set up at 1516 McGee by 1921. The automobile venture sputtered in 1923, when the federal judge at Kansas City ruled against accepting automobile paper for rediscounting. It had been the business practice of the time and many firms, including Beggs, failed as a result of the ruling and its enforcement.⁸ Sam and J. W. Beggs, along with E. R. Sandusky, were then listed as affiliated with the Metropolitan Motor Company. It was a garage operation at 1306-1308 Central/Wyandotte Avenue (apparently filling the block along West

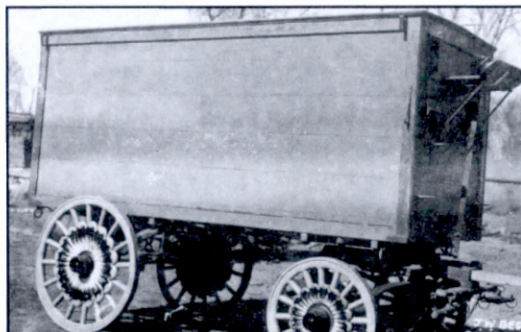
13th Street, filling between Central and Wyandotte Streets, across from today's Allis Plaza). Bill later stated that he sold Stutz and Nash automobiles and the activity might have occurred at this time.

Wagon production ceased about 1923, after the firm had changed over to internal combustion vehicle manufacture and servicing. The following year was the last directory listing for the Beggs Motor Car Company. The Beggs factory was leased to the Alexander Wayne Company, a waste paper and steel recycling company in early 1925, bringing to a close a two-decade long period of circus wagon manufacture at Kansas City.

Samuel M. Beggs passed away on April 25, 1928 at the age of 69 in Kansas City. He was buried there in Forest Hill Cemetery. He was adequately noteworthy to have merited an obituary in the *Billboard* (May 5, 1928, page 88). J. W. "Bill" Beggs, Sr. served in France in World War I, became a successful representative for New York Life Insurance Company, ran for political office once on the Republican ticket and retired in 1950. He passed away in March 6, 1982, having successfully perpetuated appreciation of his family's vehicle work for future generations.

The Beggs firm supplied wagons to a broad variety of overland and railroad shows, including circuses. Photography records much of what is known about their work, which was only infrequently commented upon in the trade journals. Sam Beggs worked more than he talked, yealding the paucity of sales coverage. More than likely Beggs total

This Yankee Robinson closed baggage wagon was built by Beggs in 1908. J. W. Beggs, Jr. photo.



output for showmen was somewhat greater than what is known solely from the available printed and photographic records. It would seem that their work satisfied showmen that were furthest removed from the better-known New York, Cincinnati, Peru and Baraboo wagon builders.

In his 1948 article, Bill Beggs noted that Mollie Bailey, Ben Wallace, the Campbell Bros. and others, all who started with overland operations, were customers of the firm. Photography confirms that Beggs built overland vehicles for Frank J. Taylor (advance wagon and combination baggage and ticket wagon, 1890), Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circus (six small cages, a ticket wagon and most of the other vehicles, 1908), Elstun Bros. Shows (ticket wagon and two small cages, 1909) the Great Eastern Shows (a complete set of eighteen wagons of all types, 1910), Burke & Gordon's Big Uncle Tom's Cabin Show (three sleeping wagons and a stringer wagon, 1914), Tripp's Traveling Zoo (compartmented animal wagon, 1915) and Fowler and Clark's Shows (combination baggage and ticket wagon, 1915).⁹ The Heber Bros. Circus, an overland operation from Columbus, Ohio, ordered a cage in the spring of 1914 from Beggs. It arrived about two weeks after it had been commissioned, testimony to the firm's ability to rapidly accomplish rush orders. Some of the last cages built by Beggs went to the Mighty Haag overland show in the early 1920s, as the show segued onto trucks. Photos exist of a Haag cage body built by Beggs.¹⁰

Beggs applied all that they had learned about making farm wagons to the manufacture of overland circus wagons. In some cases, the resemblance between the two types of vehicles is startling. A view of a 1909 Elstun combination ticket and baggage wagon looks very much like a modified Beggs farm wagon, down to the "reach" or "perch," the connecting pole between the front and rear gearing that is typically not seen on circus vehicles. In describing the typical overland, combination office and ticket wagon, the circa 1906 Beggs catalog stated that they had "Sarven wheels; 1-1/2

inch Concord steel axles; full platform gears with springs and fifth wheel; made standard track for country roads; body 10 feet long, 4 feet wide, 6 feet high, (except where wheels run under)." The platform wagon design was arranged so as to keep the wagon bed as level as possible under varying road conditions. Internally it was fitted with an office table and lockable drawers, all arranged so that they could fold out of the way and enable the majority of the wagon to be used for baggage storage. The Yankee Robinson ticket wagon had a flip up top door as well as swing opening bottom doors to facilitate ticket sales or baggage loading.

Bill Beggs recalled their business progressing from overland wagons to tunnel car and gilley wagons that could be dismantled for compact loading. Beggs definitely built a small bandwagon, a light plant and five open top baggage wagons for George Christy's tunnel car operation circa 1918-1920. Documentation has yet to be found for additional tunnel car show sales, but a review of Beggs photography suggests any number of cross cage candidates for Beggs credit. Showmen initially commenced to use larger performing dens in the 1870s and 1880s, double and triple compartment dens and heavier cages becoming more commonplace as the railroad outfits proliferated. Cross cages were essentially an outgrowth of the smaller, two-horse overland dens utilized by traveling menageries and overland circuses. Small cages continued to be popular with showmen such as Ben Wallace and Charles Sparks, who continued to use them into the first decade of the 20th century. For circus men that started in a modest way, with a two-car operation, the Beggs design presented an economical opportunity to offer a menagerie. Beggs cross cages were made to turn crosswise inside a baggage car and measured 7 feet long by 3 ft.-3-inches wide. In 1920, one cross cage was priced at \$750; two were \$700 each, while three or more brought the price down to \$650.¹¹

Beggs advertised in the mid-1910s that they had the internal capability to manufacture heavy wheel sets and

welded axles. They had a complete wheel shop with all of the necessary specialized tools for wooden spoke and felloe manufacture, as well as wheel assembly. This is documented in photography.¹² If Beggs couldn't sell an entire wagon, they'd offer the wheels, axles and undergear necessary to make one. They sold such a complement of parts to Sells-Floto, which erected a large hippo den on them for 1915. The Akron-Selle Company and other firms also supplied similar components for placement under wagon bodies built by show forces.

One Beggs letterhead featuring a farm wagon proclaimed, "Felloes boiled in oil." The practice was expanded in a circa 1906 catalog, wherein it was stated that steam-heated linseed oil was thoroughly impregnated into the tread area, followed by application of a heavy paste of iron mineral paint. The latter served to keep water out of the mating surfaces of the felloes and the tire. While the treatment worked well for Beggs, recent attempts to utilize the practice on restored circus wagon wheels caused paint adhesion problems, perhaps the result of modern commercial paint mixtures not being compatible with the oil. After assembly, Beggs dated their wheels and placed them in dry storage for one to two years before putting them to use.

Select white oak, seasoned for three to five years, was used to make the wooden hubs and spokes. Wooden axles were made from shell bark hickory and gearing from clear butt-cut white oak and hickory.

In 1911 Beggs built three baggage wagons, a small band wagon, a ticket wagon and two chariots for Indian Pete's Wild West. J. W. Beggs, Jr.

Straight-grain ash or butt-cut white oak was selected for poles while hickory was used for doubletrees, single trees and neck yokes. Tires and hub bands were heated to a "white hot" temperature before being shrunk in place. The higher temperature assured the tightest possible fit after the components were cooled to ambient temperature.

No mention has been found of a foundry being located in the Beggs shop. Such work was probably subcontracted to a local casting works. The same may have been true for the cast Sarven wheel hubs. Forged axles, springs and tires were also bought outside for resale, as was common with most wagon manufacturers. This outsourcing of specialized components was continued when the conversion was made from wagon to automobile manufacture.

Railroad show wagon production by Beggs was as diverse as their overland trade. Their standard stock in trade was farm and lighter duty commercial vehicles, not the heavy commercial conveyances, especially brewery wagons, that formed the basis of other circus wagon builders existence such as Sebastian and Bode. It took about a decade until Beggs up-graded the general duty level of their wagons to the heavier designs that were spearheaded by Bode about 1900. The changeover made them a player in railroad wagon market and such orders are documented for them after 1910. Beggs customers included Indian Pete's Wild West (a bandchariot, three baggage wagons, a ticket wagon and a racing chariot, 1911) and C. B. Irwin's Irwin Bros. Wild West (an air calliope, stake side and other baggage wagons, 1914). The wild west wagons rolled on wheels with large wooden hubs, as opposed



to the more frequently encountered Sarven metal hubs. Beggs could complete such wagons entirely inhouse with a minimum of outsourced components.

Sam Beggs visited Fred Buchanan's Iowa winter quarters in the spring of 1914, enjoyed a great feast and was later favored with an order for wagons. Several large baggage wagons at Circus World Museum with a George Christy heritage carry drag shoes that have the Beggs name cast into them. These were the wagons that Christy sold to Ken Maynard for his proposed 1936 wild west operation and that later went into Disney Studios possession in the mid-1950s. Their presence confirms that the Texas showman purchased selected components, or perhaps complete wagons, from the firm in his heyday, circa 1927, when Christy was upgrading his wagon fleet to his own adopted standards.

Beggs drag shoes are on a number of former 1938 Hagenbeck-Wallace baggage wagons preserved at Circus World Museum. Observers naturally conclude that Beggs fabricated the vehicles, but such is not the case. In 1965, Bill Beggs donated the patterns for the firm's three-inch and six-inch drag shoes to the museum. Ten copies of each were made in cast aluminum and somewhat indiscriminately applied to various wagons. Among those to which they were applied were the Hagenbeck-Wallace wagons, which were then being processed through the museum wagon shop. A number of them had arrived from California lacking their drag shoes. The well-intentioned retrofitting action has muddled the provenance of these American Circus Corporation vehicles that have no ascertainable connection with Beggs or Kansas City.

One of the mysteries relating to the Beggs operation was their use of a drawing of the 1905 Barnum & Bailey steam calliope in a 1913 advertisement and later in their catalog. One of their staff, perhaps the artistically inclined Sam Beggs himself, had expended the effort to take the familiar spring 1905 side view

photograph of the wagon and to create a traced but altered line drawing from it. One can only surmise that Beggs selected the wagon as an example to fulfill their ad claim that "There is no limit to our ability to furnish any style wanted." Kratz, who caused the original photograph to be made in the spring of 1905, might have sent a print to Beggs in response to their proposal request for a calliope. The wagon, essentially destroyed in a mishap the same year, had not existed as an intact vehicle for nearly a decade by the time the Beggs advertisement was placed.



This Yankee Robinson Circus small ticket wagon was built by Beggs in 1908. Pfening Archives.

The calliope sketch is also the only such remaining drawing attributable to the Beggs firm. Most other wagon makers prepared at least modest sketches, or in some cases, detailed renderings, of the wagons that they were proposing to construct. No other Beggs drawings have survived the passage of time. Similarly, from an artisan perspective, the carvers or firm that supplied the wooden decorative elements placed on Beggs wagons has not been determined. They may have been created in-house, but their relatively infrequent appearance would favor a purchased source.

The calliope wagon mystery was extended when the Hannibal Wagon Company of Hannibal, Missouri, utilized another version of Barnum & Bailey's calliope wagon, as well as a representation of an H. L. Witt style cage wagon, in their single advertisement in *Billboard*, printed in the May 16, 1914 issue (page 59). It might be explained this way. After

James W. Beggs sold out his share in the Carrollton factory to Samuel in 1899 he relocated to Hannibal, where he conducted his own vehicle making concern until selling out in 1907. It's possible that his successor simply "borrowed" the calliope cut for further use. The Hannibal firm has little known show work to their credit, their only documented order being one of possibly ten wagons for the Polack Brothers' World at Home Shows, a railroad carnival, noted in the advertisement.¹³

Though the Bode Wagon Company was usually favored with Hagenbeck-Wallace's vehicle work into the 1910s, Beggs reportedly made six cages for the show in 1917. Albert Bode may have been unable to commit to the order because he was entirely focused on completing the decorated truck bodies for Frank Spellman's motorized circus. A search of Hagenbeck-Wallace photography for the ensuing years did not provide an identification for the results of this commission, which took place shortly

before William H. "Cap" Curtis commenced to rebuild the show's dens into the well-known "Corporation cages." Among Beggs' last orders for railroad circus vehicles were twelve wagons furnished to Al G. Barnes in 1922. That year was highlighted by the addition of six new parade wagons outfitted with carvings that had been procured from the Bode Wagon Company. Beggs may have supplied the undergearing, or perhaps entire wagons, as well as possibly six additional, baggage or cage wagons.¹⁴

Beggs made Roman racing chariots for circuses as well as numerous gypsy caravans, to a design unlike those commonly seen in England. The firm had at least two foreign circus wagon buyers. Tony Lowande, (1869-1937), a circus man from Buenos Aires, Argentina, purchased a handsomely appointed bandchariot for the 1913 season. A handsome cross cage was also furnished to his Circo Tony Lowande at the same time. A period Kansas City newspaper reported that Beggs received \$4,000 for the two wagons. The bandwagon had \$150 of gold leaf applied

to it, with the Beggs style sunburst wheels also being installed. This vehicle was likely the most elaborate wagon ever executed by the firm. Both were selected to illustrate their respective types in the Beggs show wagon catalog, while the bandwagon also appeared in a new letterhead designed for the firm. A ticket wagon was later furnished around 1915 to the Escalante Bros. Circus of Mexico.

A trademark of Beggs parade wagon construction was the application of carved, circular panels to the outside of wagon wheels. These entirely decorative elements can be seen on a number of Beggs made vehicles, including Buchanan's Yankee Robinson in the 1910s and later in the 1920s on his Robbins Bros. Circus. Beggs termed the design "sunburst" and it appears that subsequent students of wagon history were excessively influenced by Beggs use of the phrase. No distinction was made between the Beggs design and the more common wedge-insert style decorative wheels other than to sometimes term the Beggs arrangement "outside sunbursts."

That phrase is not encountered in the period literature. At least two showmen had termed wheels with wedges inserted between the spokes "sunset" wheels, in keeping with the red to orange to yellow decorative

Elstun Bros. combination wagon. Beggs many years experience in building high quality commercial conveyances carried over into their overland circus work, causing some show vehicles like this one to resemble up-graded farm wagons. Photograph courtesy Sherie Murphy.



paint scheme that suggested a beautiful setting of the sun. Henry Moeller, Jr. used the word "panel" to identify the wedge-shaped pieces of wood that were inserted between adjacent spokes. C. P. Fox credited the origination of the "sunburst" panel design to one of the Moeller's, not clarifying if it was Sr. or Jr., and the St. Mary's Wheel & Spoke Co. in his book *Circus Parades* (page 68). The panels can be found on the Moeller-built Ringling tableau cages of 1893, but similar designs in larger diameters and with incised designs can be found on the Barnum & Bailey pony floats in the late 1880s.

Railroad carnivals near Kansas City and elsewhere provided Beggs with a number of orders in the mid-1910s. Two large baggage wagons, labeled "R" and "L" for left and right, were built for a traveling stage show (1912), probably a back end show with a railroad carnival. The hinged sides and ends lowered down to the level of the wagon bed to provide an elevated stage, but when secured upright created a storage space for the show tent and other properties. Beggs manufactured a large organ wagon that housed, hauled and displayed the Gavioli band organ that provided the draw for Fred Kempf's "Kempf's Model City" midway attraction (1913). The left side had a horizontally split bi-fold arrangement that could be lowered into an apron in front of the wagon. Fairly's Museum with the James Patterson carnival was also transported in a large Beggs baggage wagon (circa 1913). Beggs fabricated an early concession wagon with counters and rising awnings that doubled as doors,

presumably for carnival application since the first with a circus has not been found until the 1920s.

J. Frank Hatch was an early and prominent concessionaire of motorcycle "motor-dromes," with six on tour in the spring of 1914. Beggs supplied three, heavy-duty, fifth wheel wagons to partially carry the one that went out

with the nearby Patterson Shows. The last big carnival commission given to Beggs may have been the decorated box body baggage wagon that also carried a band in the Siegrist & Silbon Shows street parade (1922). Many of these carnival wagons rolled on wooden hub wheels. The Beggs distributed photos included two views of three wagons that hauled the Philadelphia Toboggan Company three-abreast portable carousel on the James Patterson Shows (new for 1914); however, it's probable that William Frech of Maple Shade, New Jersey actually made these vehicles. The Beggs captions did not claim manufacture of the wagons and they appear to be made in the same style as other "Maple Shade" conveyances.¹⁵

Following the transition to motor vehicles, Beggs turned out bodies for automobiles and trucks. They also solicited truck business from shows in the mid-1920s, advertising close on the heels of the successful 1926 tour of the motorized Downie Bros. Circus. At least three calliope trucks were made to house the Tangle Calliaphones fielded by the Singer show and Murphy Bros. Shows in 1920, or 1923-1924. The Beggs Six automobile chassis served as the basis for these conveyances. The fabricated bodies were fitted with applied, wooden carvings, the decorative practices from the wagon era being retained. Unit number 12 was illustrated in a Beggs ad in the *Billboard*, December 31, 1927 (page 65) while numbers 10 and 17, as well as number 12 are documented in Beggs photos. Another unusual truck was turned out for Bracken's Musical Show, a tented vaudeville operation. On either side of the cowl was mounted one half of a Deagan Unafon, which was played from a keyboard inside the cab as the truck rode through city streets. The Beggs style sunbursts were applied, in a small diameter design, to the wheels of these vehicles. One cannot but wonder how long they endured turning at the higher rpms experienced by motorized vehicles. The sunbursts retailed in 1927 at \$16.00 per set.

There are a number of vehicle parts surviving that bear testimony

to the quality of Beggs made wagons, but it does not appear that a complete circus or show wagon with a provable Beggs origin is in existence today. A Beggs farm wagon, built at the Carrollton factory, was still in that community as late as 1965, appreciated as an artifact of their local history.

Elstun Bro's United Shows and the Great Eastern Shows

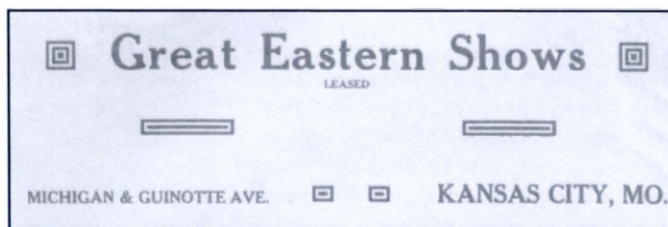
When historian George L. Chindahl inquired of J. W. Beggs, Sr. in the early 1950s if his family was connected to the circus business, he initially stated that he had no information on the subject. To this day, no one knows for certain if there was a connection between the wagon builders and one mid-19th century American circus. Charles Bolus, a long time showman, once recalled that he traveled with the G. W. Beggs show in 1852. The minimal physical properties of the circus were hauled on mules but the human component was compelled to walk between engagements. It would have been an interesting twist in history for the owner of a no-wagon circus to include among his relations two generations of wagon builders.¹⁶

Several times in circus history the desire to own a circus consumed a wagon builder. Sometimes out of necessity they essentially became a partner, as when a showman lacked the cash to pay for the vehicles that were ready to leave the shop for the road. Cincinnati wagon builder Albert W. Bode proactively became a primary mover in the effort to launch the Coney Island Hippodrome Show in the resort of the same name. It failed within a couple months after opening in the spring of 1908 and Bode ended up owning a huge big top, likely to his regret from a lesson learned the hard way. Samuel Beggs may have read about Bode's actions in the *Billboard*, where they advertised for show vehicle business. Having been watching from the sidelines for years, perhaps Beggs thought they'd similarly like to take a flyer in show business and did so

within the next year by taking title to the Elstun Bro's United Shows, a modest dog and pony show operation.

The Elstun show was owned and managed by C. W. Elstun and his three sons, C. W. Jr., Gene and Frank. Without explanation, the show's letterhead gives their initials as G. D., E. [Eugene] W. and F. R. [Frank]. The father and Gene traveled with the show, Frank managed the advance and C. W. Jr. directed other affairs in the office at Kansas City, Kansas. It was always an overland operation, framed during the winter of 1904 with some animals from Emil Seibel's dog and pony outfit of Watertown, Wisconsin. It ran each year through 1909, the last under the guidance of the Elstun clan. Being a small, western overland show, news about its comings and goings were seldom printed in the eastern trade papers. Even reviews in local newspapers contained little about the nature of the operation. According to J. W. Beggs, Sr., his father's firm made wagons for the show at different times. A photograph survives that records a typical overland ticket wagon fabricated by Beggs for Elstun Bro's United Shows. It was dated 1909. Other prints show a pair of cross cages also labeled as Elstun by Beggs. The cages have hip rings like those on railroad show wagons, which may only mean that their style of cross cage was generically built

Regardless of the size of the circus, shows almost always invested in a quality letterhead for correspondence. The Elstun family portraits filled this example from circa 1909. Elstun file, Circus World Museum.



This very simple letterhead design suggests the frugality of operational economy practiced by the Beggs family after they took over the Elstun show. George L. Chindahl Papers, Circus World Museum.

and adaptable to both overland and railroad shows.

Sam Beggs bought the circus after it ran into financial problems, perhaps with consideration for the money still owed on the vehicles furnished. Bill Beggs recalled a take-over date of 1908, but a published spring 1909 roster reveals no Beggs involvement. Perhaps Beggs was a silent owner at the time, not desiring to appear as competitors to other prospective circus wagon buyers. The property was brought to Kansas City, where it was outfitted for the 1910 season as the Great Eastern Shows at the Beggs factory. A Great Eastern letterhead used four decades later by J. W. Beggs, Sr. has "(leased)" under the title, suggesting something other than an outright ownership. Mention was made of new wagons in one pre-season report, confirmation of further contributions from the Beggs wagon shop. Later news described the new vehicles as being a "complete bunch of show wagons, consisting of cages, band tableau, ticket and tableau, cook house and baggage wagons, totaling eighteen." According to his own hand, Bill Beggs, Sr., then 21 years old, was installed as manager, assuredly to protect his father's investment in the

operation. He retained C. W. Elstun as an animal trainer, added some new acts, made the show larger and played through Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska.¹⁷

One season of touring completely

satisfied the Beggs family's desire to be in show business. In addition to the daily moving circus out on the road, they were still managing the flourishing wagon firm and its entire array of needs. They sold the performance aspects of the circus to an amusement park man, J. H. Eschman, and apparently put the remainder into the barn, perhaps selling some of the wagons individually to other shows. It's possible that the wagons were later leased or sold to Eschman, Beggs not wanting to take a risk on losing them via the unproven capabilities of a novice, traveling showman.

J. H. Eschman Shows

John Harry Eschman, or J. H. "Johnnie" Eschman (1861?-1934) as he was better known, was a showman of multiple interests. Born in Dresden, Ohio, he relocated to Minneapolis, Minnesota by 1884. His show or performance career reportedly commenced two years prior, in 1882. He was a musician, a founder of the Minneapolis Musicians Union, and active in the local Danz and Minneapolis Symphony Orchestras. His cash cow appears to have been Lake Harriet Park. It was an amusement resort that he leased and operated between 1904 and 1909, riding the curve of interest in such attractions in the first decade of the 20th century. He was adequately wealthy to take a tour of the world that commenced in October 1909 and did not conclude until April 1910. Perhaps inspired by a friendship with the circus owning Bonheur brothers, Eschman operated a circus under his own name from 1910 through 1917. During his eight year circus career he crossed Canada three times, visited Prince Edward Island twice, Vancouver on the west, went to the West Indies twice and once to Mexico, not to mention pitching tents in every state in the Union, according to Eschman's memory. He remained a bachelor for many years, finally wedding Nellie Thomas on February 27, 1917. She survived his passing in 1934.¹⁸

Eschman spent part of the season of 1909 touring with the Cole & Cooper circus, thought to be a two-car operation owned by J. Augustus



Johnny Eschman cut a handsome profile, as this view from the February 9, 1918 issue of *Billboard* attests. He was then 57 years old.

Jones. With that fundamental, but surely gritty experience behind him, he inserted an advertisement in the *Billboard* to purchase a circus or dog and pony show. Eschman eventually purchased the performance aspects of the Great Eastern Show, the former Elstun Bro's. United, from Sam Beggs. He fielded a modest two-car operation, like the one he mentored with, using the title of J. H. Eschman's European Shows.¹⁹ The show wintered in Minneapolis 1911-1912. Feeling his oats, perhaps, Eschman had his performing troupe in the Bahamas in the spring of 1914.

Presumably satisfied with his suc-

cess during three years of operation, in the fall of 1914 Eschman determined to enlarge his operation. He wrote to the Heber Bros. Circus of Columbus, Ohio, inquiring about one particular bandwagon, originally with the John H. Sparks Shows, which struck his fancy. It was not available for purchase. The Eschman show was in Hot Springs, Arkansas over the winter of 1914-1915. Eschman expanded with his acquisition of an entire railroad outfit from equipment broker William P. Hall (1864-1932) of Lancaster, Missouri. Unfortunately, the surviving Hall papers do not detail the transaction. It appears that seven cars, something less than half the 15 cars proclaimed to the press, were involved. The train consist was comprised of two stocks, two flats and two sleepers, with one advertising car. The enhanced flat car operation demanded a new and more imposing title for the enterprise. It became J. H. Eschman's World's United Railway Shows, with Arizona Bill's Real Historical Wild West. The show moved up to ten cars in size when three additional vehicles arrived in mid-1915. Added were two flats and another sleeper.²⁰

Later photographic prints identified by Bill Beggs as being Eschman wagons document a motley group of vehicles, some appearing to be former overland show wagons with

The lead vehicle of the Eschman parade was the Band Tableau that arrived on the property during the 1915 expansion. Circus World Museum collection.



lighter duty undergears and rave reinforced front panels. One bore paintings of American Indians, somewhat fulfilling the Arizona Bill portion of the title. Though the Beggs-supplied captions stated, "Checkered history many shows," the Beggs style sunbursts on two align at least those components with the builder. The Beggs prints also confirm that the Hall deal included a ticket wagon that had formerly been part of the Young Buffalo Wild West 1911-1914, identifiable by three applied picture frames on each side. Prior to that it had been with Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson show 1906-1910.²¹ By 1908, when Buchanan went on rails in mid-season, he had another Beggs-built ticket wagon available to him, one of more conventional railroad show design with a three-window ticket selling arrangement. It made the combination wagon of overland design surplus, suggesting either a direct sale to Eschman or one facilitated by Buchanan's long time friend and backer, William P. Hall.

The show initially wintered in the Twin Cities, but then moved on to Kansas City, Missouri, residing on a couple of vacant lots at Guinotte Avenue and Salisbury Street in the East Bottoms. It was a few blocks west from the Beggs factory and surely the wagon builder had helped to arrange the site for Eschman. In addition to perhaps having Beggs do some winter wagon work for the firm, they brought on board one of the family members. Bill Beggs stated in a 1978 story that he traveled with the Eschman circus when he was in his twenties. Presumably it was to gain traveling show experience or perhaps participate in the first count and make certain that the wagon builder's bill was paid. It does not appear that Sam Beggs directly invested in the outfit.

Though a 1910 review from a small Wisconsin community had stated the show was free of crime and corruption, the times had changed by 1916. It was identified as a "rotten outfit" that "operated a gambling outfit." It offered "so-called men only entertainments in which females are supposed to do some vulgar dancing," accord-



Beggs sold this truck to the Jim Bracken's Musical group in 1922. J. W. Beggs, Sr. photograph.

ing to the Tonganoxie (KS) *Mirror*, of April 27, 1916, which happened to be the season opener. Either Eschman had turned away from close management of the enterprise or had knowingly permitted the grifters to get a stranglehold on his show to make it financially successful, at least in the short term. Hot Springs, Arkansas, the one-time winter home of the circus, was a known retreat for grifters and the presence of Darwin C. Hawn (1875-1950) with the enterprise also loomed large in the changed morality of the enterprise.

The tour of 1917 was a poor one. The first nine days brought nothing but rain, hail, snow and mud, despite a late April departure from quarters.

The bad news was confirmed in October when Eschman related that he planned to take out his original two-car operation at the close of the season, to be followed by a minstrel show. It likely meant he lacked the cash reserve necessary to winter the circus. Less than a month later, with the 10-car show still on tour, the end was revealed. Eschman placed an advertisement in *Billboard* offering his ten-car property for sale. There were no ready buyers and the outfit went into quarters at Kansas City, eight of the workmen taking positions in the Beggs factory for the winter. Photographs taken at the time reveal a faded property sorely in need of repairs and decoration. It was a contrast to the report in the Valley Falls (KS) *New Era* of April 27, 1916 that stated, "The wagons looked brand new in their coats of red paint."

Frank A. Robbins (1854-1920), a retired circus owner who had managed the auction of other circuses before, visited Eschman at Kansas

City during the 1917-1918 holidays.

The two of them went to visit James Patterson in Paola, Kansas, perhaps to work out a deal for the entire show. Nothing came of it and the property was auctioned piecemeal at 1600 Guinotte Avenue on January 30, 1918. Total proceeds from the Eschman auction were a bit over \$20,000, happily some three thousand above Robbins' pre-sale estimate. No details were provided concerning the sale of the wagons.²²

The Eschman Band Tableau

The list of Eschman properties to be offered at auction included "2 Band Tableaus" and "1 Ticket and Bandwagon." One of the two Band Tableaus was likely the bandwagon that has come to be identified with the J. H. Eschman Shows. It had served as the show's lead bandwagon in the daily street parade. The combination wagon was presumably the former Yankee Robinson-Young Buffalo piece with three frames. Whether the two vehicles had a shared history cannot be determined from surviving documentation. Bill Beggs' caption for a photograph of the bandwagon simply termed it "well known" and stated it had "insert sunbursts." No affiliation was made between it and the Beggs firm, which when combined with the panel-style sunset wheels suggests that others had manufactured it.

The August 1914 arrival of the Young Buffalo Wild West property at the Hall farm and the subsequent mid-winter assembly of the Eschman show at the site make a strong case for a Young Buffalo to Eschman transfer. The Young Buffalo outfit had an eclectic collection of parade wagons including an 1866 Fielding bandchariot and a fancy tableau of Bode manufacture (both later acquired by carnival proprietor Clarence A. Wortham), the former Buchanan combination ticket-tableau wagon, a steam calliope of unknown provenance (possibly a Beggs rebuild of the former 1904 Downie calliope that had been with Yankee Robinson 1905-1908), as well as three large but minimally decorated tableaus. Each of the trio of



Horne's Zoological letterhead. Though it was once a significant supplier of animals to circuses, zoos and film studios, little is known about the concern's activities today. Pfening Archives.

tableaus is known by a single, surviving photograph. One of them, later on the 1920 Rhoda Royal Shows, bears some resemblance in general layout to the Eschman wagon, another suggestion of a shared provenance. It would not be surprising to discover a new photograph of a fourth, which we would hypothesize as the Eschman Band Tableau.

Qualitatively speaking, the Eschman bandwagon was typical of the medium-size railroad show bandwagons of the 1910s. It would compare with those that could be seen on Gollmar Bros. and other similar outfits that played the Granger states. It was of the box-body style of construction so that it could carry a full load of baggage, in addition to serving in parade as a bandwagon. The applied carvings were neither deep, nor particularly noteworthy, but they served adequately well to decorate the wagon. One wonders if the shell design may have held some particular meaning for the designer or buyer, and was thus chosen as the central feature of the otherwise theme-less adornments.²³ Initially the wagon top was embellished with nothing more than a stylish application of the show's title, "J. H. Eschman World United Railway Shows."

The black and white prints of the Eschman show suggest that the body of the bandwagon was painted solid red. The title on the skyboard was likely in gold. The majority of the

carvings were silver, but the interior area of the shell appears to have been gilded. The wagon rolled on Sarven type wheels, though the panels between the spokes may have been in a solid color as opposed to sunset colors. A foot brake was used to retard wagon motion and stop it when necessary.

Horne's Zoological Arena Company

Horne's Zoological Arena Company of Kansas City, Missouri, acquired the Eschman Band Tableau and perhaps other circus chattel at the 1918 sale. The Horne firm was a prosperous wild animal import dealership operated by Ellis Phipps "E. P." Horne (1853?-1924) and his son, I. Sherman "Trader" Horne (1881/1886?-1959), as well as two unidentified individuals given as G. A. and H. A. Horne. Those may have been their wives, as there is later mention of a G. S. Horne and Trader's wife was Grace. "H. A." might have been A. H. Moorehead, Vice-President of the firm in 1905-1906. The younger Horne apparently received the nickname "Trader" following the 1927 publication of the memoir of Alfred Aloysius Horn, a British-born West African peddler who utilized the pseudonym "Trader Horn." His story, edited by South African novelist Ethelreda Lewis, was made into a Hollywood film by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1931. The earliest that the nickname has been found in print is 1945, but presumably it was in use sometime in the 1930s, surely to

Horne's delight and aggrandizement. At their zenith they claimed to have ten thousand animals in residence on their Independence, Missouri farm. The Horne clientele included circuses, parks, zoological gardens, carnivals, motion picture companies, stage troupes, state fish and game commissions and private zoo owners, including boxer Jess Willard.

The Horne family had an interesting history. The published statements concerning them cannot always be verified in the surviving records, and go somewhat beyond the expected showbiz hyperbole. There is record of a Professor Horne, a bird trainer, in 1883-1886, and his wife, a Circassian lady, but no Horne-titled circus or show. E. P. Horne's obituary stated that he had operated his own circus prior to 1897. The family later set the start of the animal business to that year, though apparently not as a large-scale import and sale operation. Until late 1905 E. P. Horne apparently toured an animal outfit he called Horne's Trained Animal Shows, perhaps doing agricultural and street fairs, or stage presentations. In late 1905 he established Horne's Zoological Arena, along with a permanent winter quarters and zoo in Denver, Colorado. There may have been a connection with Denver's Sells-Floto Circus, as the Horne firm is promoted in the 1905-1906 Sells-Floto Magazine (route book), according to George Chindahl's notes. Horne's was still in Denver in 1908, with relocation to Kansas City occurring by 1911.²⁴



The only known image of E. P. Horne is this portrait, which accompanied the announcement of his death in the July 13, 1924 *Kansas City Journal-Post*.

Horne's Zoological Arena Company, Inc. was formally incorporated in 1913. E. P. Horne served as President and son Sherman fulfilled the combined duties of secretary, treasurer and general manager. General offices for the business were at 317-318 Keith & Perry Building in Kansas City, Missouri as early as

1914. The "Zoological Gardens and Shipping Station" were situated east of Independence, Missouri, on the north side of Spring Branch Road, which is now known as Truman Road. Three tragedies impacted the firm within as many consecutive years, starting with the zoo facility being destroyed by fire on October 21, 1922. A second fire, at the Horne Car and Equipment Company, the transport end of the business, took place in late 1923.²⁵

The best portrait of I. Sherman "Trader" Horne is this view from the 1954 World Jungle Compound program.



The following year, E. P. Horne died on July 11 as the result of blood poisoning from an infected wound. A Kansas City attorney, Samuel R. Freet, partner in McVey & Freet, was a vice-president of Horne's in 1924. The likely reason is that Sherman Horne, though secretary and manager of animals, was residing in Long Beach, California. The following year he and his wife Grace relocated to Alhambra, California, a location made known in the Kansas City directory. The firm still had an assistant secretary in the Kansas City area in 1932, but in fact the business had already been re-focused in the Los Angeles area film colony. By 1935 there was no longer a Kansas City listing for the Hornes or their business.

Sherman's obituary states that they operated Horne Bros. Circus 1913-1914 and the family names appear in the annual *Billboard* show roster lists for 1913-1918, along with various reports of rosters and wagon purchases. But there's no evidence, such as surviving posters, programs or reviews that confirm that they ever actually toured a circus despite intermittent trade reports about various winter quarters, wagon purchases, etc.

The Hornes were active in buying and selling circus chattel in the 1910s and 1920s, limited competitors to the better-known William P. Hall.

Their extensive animal dealings made them flush with cash in the 1910s, to the extent that they eventually purchased a complete circus outfit. Their earliest known vehicle purchase, made in 1915, was a fold-out 20 or 24-foot arena wagon (built

by Leonhardt of Baltimore, Maryland in 1914) and some miniature cages off the Jones brothers in 1915. The Hornes foreclosed on chattel they leased to the 20-car Coop & Lent railroad circus on July 23, 1917 and brought it to Independence, where they planned to sell it piecemeal. They had to rent an

old planing mill on East Lexington Street to house it. With partner R. M. Harvey they converted and launched the property as a motorized show in 1918, but it proved to be a failure in short order. In the beginning of 1919 they purchased outright the 25-car Jess Willard-Buffalo Bill Wild West. The Hornes sold it piecemeal to various circuses and carnivals. They offered to sell fifty railroad cars as well as much other circus property and equipment in the spring of 1919. Al G. Barnes, F. J. Taylor, the Veal Bros. Shows railroad carnival and other known showmen

The World Jungle Compound in Thousand Oaks, California. Pfening Archives.



bought equipment from them in the early 1920s.²⁶

The Hornes retained ownership of the Eschman Band Tableau until selling it to George W. Christy (1889?-1975). Christy upgraded from a two-car show to a flat car operation in 1922. It's likely that change-over marked the acquisition of the vehicle from the Hornes.

Recognizing the potential in animal leases to the film industry, the younger Horne opened an office in Los Angeles in 1923 and eventually relocated there. In 1945 he and former Al G. Barnes employee William J. "Billy" Richards bought Goebel's Lion Farm and renamed it the World Jungle Compound. They made significant money with the weekend presentation of animal actors that were used on weekdays to make television programs and films. Horne and Richards sold their interests to others and Horne passed away in 1959.²⁷

From Christy to Circus World Museum

The former Eschman Band Tableau served as the second bandwagon on Christy Bros. in 1923. One of the bandmen who rode and played on it was a precocious six or seven-year old snare drummer named Harry James (1916-1983). He would later achieve great fame as a bandleader in the 1940s. The wagon bore the number 9 this season. Christy altered the appearance of the wagon with the addition of scroll carvings to the skyboards and the application of a polychromatic paint scheme. It appears that the large shell on the side and the skyboard carvings immediately above it were gilded. The leaf carvings flanking the shell and the scrolls above, below and to the sides of the center panel, along with the remaining skyboard carvings, were painted silver. The body of the wagon may have been red with either a blue, light green, orange or yellow background behind the shell area.

As originally built, the wagon had a foot-operat-

ed brake. Sometime after 1927 and before 1936, Christy altered the wagon to his favored screw brake arrangement. At that time the wagon bore the number 81. Commencing in mid-season 1927 Christy purchased and took delivery of several former Barnum & Bailey, Ringling and Forepaugh-Sells parade wagons. These finer vehicles enabled him to retire a number of lesser show wagons, one of them being the former Eschman Band Tableau. It was relegated to storage at his South Houston, Texas winter quarters. The other chattel that had formed Christy's Lee Bros. Circus of 1925-1926 and Christy Bros., which closed in 1930, eventually joined it there.

George Christy continued his circus activities in various and modest ways in his post-railroad circus days, continuing to dabble in the sale of show equipment for another two decades and holding some parts into the 1960s. He responded to an inquiry about wagons from one Warren Corry of Morristown, New Jersey in 1933. The response that Christy sent out on February 23 described the Eschman wagon as "Christy Band Tableaux sea shell. Carvings on side a pretty wagon."

Following a big sale of equipment to Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell for their new in 1935 Cole Bros. Circus, on February 11, 1935, Christy sold Ken Maynard numerous properties for his projected Ken Maynard Diamond K Wild West. Included in the bill of sale were 25 circus wagons. The Eschman vehicle was listed as "#2 Shell Band Tab." No valid attempt was ever made to tour the Maynard show and it collapsed on Maynard's ranch. On November 17, 1936 the physical assets of the Maynard show were inventoried and appraised. The Eschman wagon was listed and described as "#108 Tableau candy Wagon 6-0x14-6/3-0x3-10 Wheels -4" Tires/3 x 3 Axles/Fair Condition [\$]200.00."

All twenty-five wagons belonging to the show were valued at a total of \$3510. They were sold in one lot to the United Tent and Awning



A young Harry James sits towards the back of the second bandwagon on the 1922 Christy Bros. Circus. Fame awaited him in a few decades. Greenberg collection, Circus World Museum.

Company of Los Angeles, California for the bargain price of \$2,250. A set of documentary type photographs was taken of the Maynard chattel by the tent firm, with an apparent eye to sell the equipment. Included was a photo of the bandwagon. One view depicts the wagon substantially as it appeared on Christy and Maynard shows. Mimeographed on the back of the print was the following information: "No. 108 Red Tableau 10' high 14' long. Last on Ken Maynard Circus—property of UNITED TENT AND AWNING CO - Los Angeles." Dave E. Bradley, Jr. (1911?-circa 1990), known as an amusement park operator and ride builder, eventually purchased a number of the Maynard wagons held by United Tent. He relocated them to his amusement venture, Beverly Park, located at Beverly and La Cienega Boulevards in Los Angeles, California. They continued their existence as movie set properties, but in generally caring hands. Various inaccurate titles and color schemes were applied to them.

Bradley held the wagons until his friend Walt Disney decided that they would serve a better purpose at the new Disneyland theme park. Disney was in the process of framing his Mickey Mouse Circus for the attraction and scoured the Los Angeles area for circus wagons. He found them at Bradley's and Jimmie Wood's storage lot.²⁸

Disney Studios skillfully and artis-

tically, but not always accurately, reconstructed the wagons, salvaging and reusing the metal work but duplicating and replacing essentially all of the wooden materials. Fortunately, they saved samples of many of the original carvings because they used them as patterns when copying the decorative elements on a duplicating machine. In the case of the Eschman Band Tableau, they

replaced the Christy and Maynard era skyboard with another one that had carvings copied from the altered Orchestmelochor tableau that later served the Miller Bros. and Arlington 101 Ranch Wild West and then Christy-owned shows. Drops enhanced with carvings were also retrofitted at this time. Disney also altered the rear panel, widening the doors and eliminating the full width molding over them. The color scheme applied, a teal blue body with a white inset panel, and gold carvings, does not appear to have had any historic precedent.

The Mickey Mouse Circus did not thrive at DisneyLand. The wagons appeared in Disney's production of the James Otis novel *Toby Tyler* and may have been leased for other studios to utilize in the late 1950s and early 1960s. When not in film prop service the wagons were relegated to studio storage. Chappie Fox (1913-2003) initiated contact with Disney Studios via an intermediary and the effort resulted in nine wagons being donated to Circus World Museum in 1962. Further requests to seek out other wagons that were also acquired by the studio resulted in the shipment of a large quantity of parts and partial wagons to Baraboo in 1966. That cache of parts revealed the extent to which Disney had reconstructed all of the wagons, including the Eschman Band Tableau.

Notes

1. Much of the Beggs genealogical information came from family notes, letters and clippings kindly furnished by Sherie Murphy. Also see Walter B. Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1921),

Vol. III, pages 868-869; *Carroll County, Missouri, 1910-1968* (Carrollton, 1968), page 370; and Jeanne Fox, "Wagons Once Built in Kansas City for Circus Units," *Kansas City Star*, July 31, 1978, page 22C.

2. *Creston Daily Advertiser*, April 14 and 16, 1886.

3. Letter from S. M. Beggs to Wm. P. Hall Shows dated June 24, 1905, William P. Hall Papers, CWM.

4. Circus World Museum possesses an example of the painted brass nameplate that was affixed to the firm's farm and commercial vehicles.

5. *Billboard*, December 5, 1908, page 38.

6. *Billboard*, December 5, 1908, page 38; November 24, 1913, page 89.

7. Letter to R. B. Hastings, June 14, 1946, Beggs file, CWM. In addition to original copies, there are numerous 1973 reprints in circulation.

8. Further coverage of the Beggs automobile venture is in "The Beggs Company Wagons, Cars, Cages," August 1, 1978, page 6.

9. The commissions are confirmed in Beggs photographs and *Billboard*, December 5, 1908, page 38.

10. *Billboard*, April 18, 1914, page 22; November 25, 1922, page 81; J. W. Beggs, [Sr.], "Circus Wagons," *Hobby-Bandwagon*, May 1948, pages 3-4.

11. Joseph T. Bradbury, "Wagons of the Christy Shows," *White Tops*, July-August 1956, pages 13-16; *Billboard*, November 27, 1920, page 64.

12. C. P. Fox, *Circus Parades*, (Century House, 1953), pages 66 and 63.

13. *Billboard*, November 29, 1913, page 89; March 14, 1914, page 47.

14. *Billboard*, February 24, 1917, page 65; July 15, 1922, page 60.

15. *Billboard*, May 16, 1914, page 59. The drome, basically a large wooden silo with access platforms and steps, required six wagons to haul it. There were actually five unique wagons to haul the Patterson carousel, specifically a horse wagon (with horizontal and vertical reinforcing raves), a scenery wagon (that doubled as a living quarters when

emptied), an enclosed organ wagon, an open stake-sided lumber wagon and a center pole wagon. The wagons are depicted in another photograph on some Pennsylvania Railroad flat cars, presumably before they were shipped west from Philadelphia to Patterson in Kansas.

16. *Billboard*, April 22, 1905, page 18; letter from J. W. Beggs, [Sr.] to George L. Chindahl dated July 12, 1952, Chindahl papers, Circus World Museum.

17. *Billboard*, March 20, 1909, page 78; March 19, 1910, page 96; February 12, 1910, page 18; March 19, 1910, page 54; letter from J. W. Beggs, [Sr.] to George L. Chindahl dated April 2, 1951, Beggs file, CWM.

18. *Billboard*, June 16, 1934, page 31; July 24, 1909, page 4; October 9, 1909, page 19; April 2, 1910, page 18; March 2, 1918, page 28; March 10, 1917, page 48.

19. *Billboard*, March 19, 1910, page 54.

20. Letter from J. H. Eschman to Heber Bros. Circus dated November 24, 1914, Robert and Brian Heber Collection, CWM; *Billboard*, February 6, 1915, page 22; *New York Clipper*, July 17, 1915, page 30.

21. The same wagon, or an identical twin, appears in a circa 1903-1905 photograph of the Bodkin Bros. Circus parade lineup in the Conover collection at CWM. It's possible that Mike Bodkin (1852-1921) sold equipment to Buchanan, thus providing a possible transfer of the vehicle.

22. *Billboard*, October 20, 1917, page 28; November 24, 1917, page 78; January 12, 1918, page 62. An ad for the auction is in *Billboard*, January

The Eschman tableau in a Mickey Mouse Circus parade at Disneyland in 1955. Pfening Archives.

12, 1918, page 31. The sale is covered in the February 9, 1918 issue, pages 30 and 63, with a portrait of Eschman on page 3.

23. The famous shell logo of Royal Dutch's Shell Oil is the most recognized symbol in the world after Santa Claus, according to some surveys. It was first presented as a mussel in 1900, to be replaced by a stylized pecten maximus, a species of scallop, in 1909. Company founder Marcus Samuel built a fortune importing knick-knacks made with shells and was thus taken by the symbolism. His Shell Transport and Trading Company was merged with Royal Dutch Petroleum Company in 1907. American operations commenced in 1912 with the formation of the American Gasoline Company.

24. *Clipper*, March 17, 1883, page 844; July 11, 1885, page 272; March 6, 1886, page 812; April 17, 1886, page 79; November 18, 1905, page 1001; December 16, 1911, page 13; *Billboard*, September 12, 1908, page 25. The *Kansas City Journal-Post*, September 14, 1930, quoted Sherman Horne to the effect that he moved to Denver when he was 17 for health reasons. He also stated that a bear tore off part of his nose, causing him to wear a silver plate the rest of his life. If true, it may explain the dearth of Horne photographs.

25. *Billboard*, October 28, 1922, page 7; December 1, 1923, page 82.

26. *Billboard*, February 6, 1922, page 22; July 19, 1924, page 113; March 22, 1919, page 72; September 7, 1959, page 62; *Jackson Examiner* (Independence, Missouri), August 10, 1917; February 21, 1919.

27. *Billboard*, December 29, 1945, page 75.

28. "Circus Relics Bring Tears to Old-Timers," *Hollywood Citizen-News*, February 10, 1951; Harry Nelson, "Old Circus Wagons brighten Junk-Yard," *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1951; "Venice C. of C. Buys 5 Wagons," *Billboard*, January 26, 1952, page 54; Sam Abbott, "Filmsters Flock to Kid Spot," *Billboard*, June 27, 1953, page 50.



STRONG WOMEN and CROSSED-DRESSED MEN: Representation of Gender by Circus Performers during the Golden Age Of the American Circus, 1860-1930

By Marcy W. Murray

"I don't want realism. I want magic! Yes, yes, magic!

I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them.

I don't tell the truth, I tell what ought to be the truth.

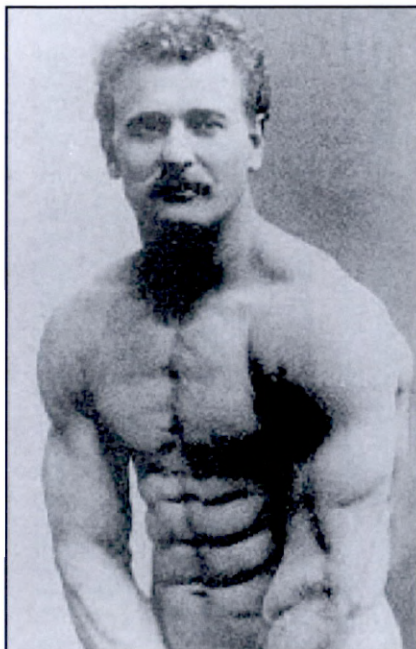
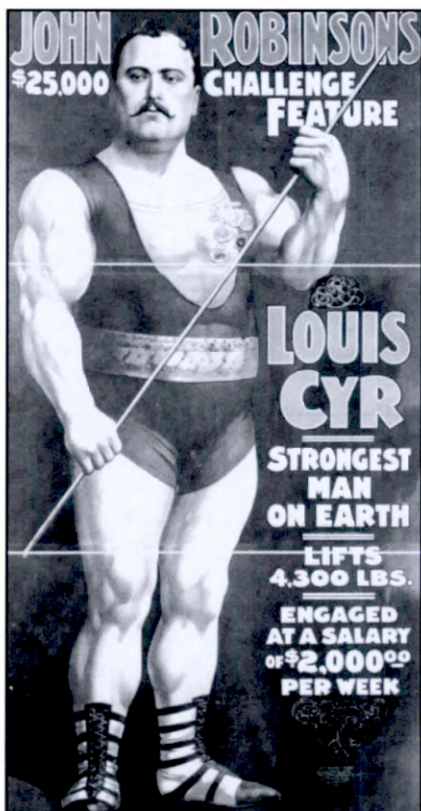
And if that is sinful, then let me be damned for it.

Don't turn the light on!"--
Tennessee Williams

A Streetcar Named Desire

The "Golden Age" of the American circus in the late 19th and early 20th centuries occurred during a time of rapid change and unrest in this nation. In response to this rapid change, the circus sought to establish itself as traditional and family enter-

Louis Cyr on John Robinson Circus in 1898. Library of Congress collection.



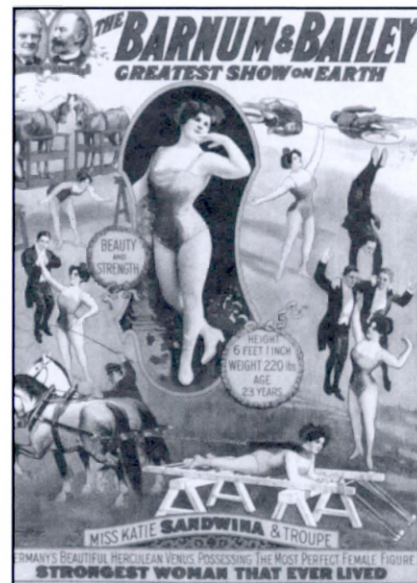
Eugen Sandow, 1867-1925. Internet photo.

tainment. America during this time was experiencing challenges to traditionally accepted norms long held to be innate and constant. It was a time of racial, social, and sexual transformation. The supremacy of the white, middle-upper class male was under attack from the immigrant, the working class, African-Americans, and the New Woman. The performances presented in the circus during this time functioned as filters that aided society in coming to terms with the threats and challenges to the white male hierarchy.

From the mid-1800s, America experienced a "crisis of masculinity" and in response the dominant male culture developed compensative strategies; "thinking about masculinity in this period meant thinking about sexual and racial dominance as well" (Kasson 19). Nineteenth century pseudo-scientific theories were

used to reaffirm the white, middle-upper class male's place at the apex of the social hierarchy while keeping women and non-white males in a separate and lower sphere. One example of this scientific reaffirmation is "the late nineteenth-century's popularized Darwinism [in which] one could identify advanced civilizations by the degree of their sexual differentiation . . . men and women of the civilized races had evolved pronounced sexual differences" (Bederman 25). This theory supported the gender dichotomy on which the patriarchal hierarchy depended by encouraging middle-upper class women to embrace an ornamental role--their burdensome clothing and frailty announced their socio-economic position. In other words, their position in society meant that they had others (those of the lower classes) to move for them and do for them. Another scientific voice that discour-

Kate Sandwina featured in Barnum & Bailey Circus. Cincinnati Art Museum collection.



aged women from entering into the "male" sphere was that of Kraft-Ebing, who published the first modern study on human sexual behavior. When defining the term lesbian, "Kraft-Ebing did not focus on the sexual behavior of the women he categorized as lesbian but rather on their social behavior and physical appearance. [He] linked lesbianism to the rejection of conventional female roles, cross-dressing, and to masculine physiological traits," (Smith-Rosenberg 269). The underlying threat in Kraft-Ebing's categorization was that to deviate from the traditional female sphere by action or appearance was to be labeled as 'degenerate' and 'other.'"

The gender dichotomies recommended by the scientific theories of the day were often reinforced in popular media. For example, in 1899, the *New York Times* ran a story that reported, "In every instance the children of the less muscular and less robust women carry off the palm . . . the children of the more robust mothers . . . are in every instance inferior . . . to those of the more womanly type" (*Muscular Parents*, 19). This article and others like it implied that the health of future generations

Madam Yucca featured on Barnum & Bailey. Cincinnati Art Museum collection.



depended on females remaining in their appropriate social spheres.

Likewise, the males of the period were bombarded with images of men like Eugen Sandow and Bernarr MacFadden; "these men emphasized how, by dint of determination and method, they had transformed themselves from puny boys to men of strength, confidence, and command" (Kasson 32).

Kate Sandwina photographed by Frederick W. Glasier. John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

Despite the scientific theories and media attempts to confine men and

women to separate spheres, a counter-culture soon appeared that advocated less cumbersome clothing and more physical exercise for women. This counter-culture gained a rapid popularity. Its proponents included Bernarr Mac Fadden whose publication *Physical Training* advocated physical health as a beauty aid; "There is not a sign denoting beauty which has not either its origin or its influencing power in the physical side of life. Health is the very foundation of all beauty grand or simple." Mac Fadden and his associates worked diligently to

counteract the demands that the dominant male society placed upon its women.

It is in this environment, that the strong woman and male cross-dressing performer existed. Although it may be argued that circus performers existed outside the boundaries of normative society, their existence and livelihood depended on that society's acceptance. The balance that these performers attained indicates much



Charmion photographed by Frederick W. Glasier. John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

about American society during the Golden Age of the American circus. Frueh points out that, "scholars now recognize that both the circus and the various forms of variety theater [in which circus acts performed during their off season] in the late nineteenth-century were influential transmitters of ideals and images" (50). As mentioned above, the circus performer functioned as a filter through which the male dominated society was able to come to terms with the threats implicit to challenges to the male hierarchy.

A 1905 Friedlander poster of Kate Sandwina's act. Library of Congress.

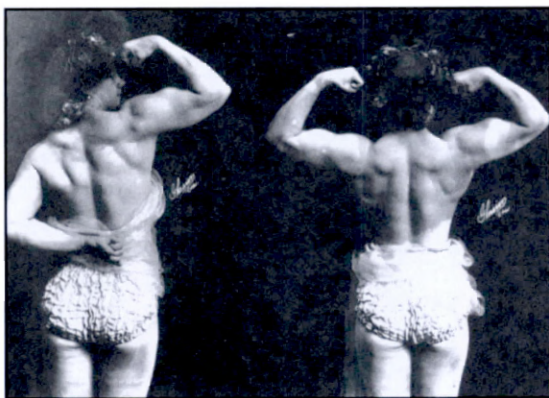


The Strong Woman

"We are all monsters, if it comes to that, We women who choose to be something more and something less than women."--May Sarton

Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing (1956)

Circus acts often echoed and exaggerated the performance aspect that they perceived in the late nineteenth-early twentieth-century assigned-gender roles. In the circus, outside of the normative society's rules, the strong woman could safely challenge the stereotype of the



Charmion photographed by Frederick W. Glasier. John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

innately frail female. Viewed as an anomaly or a freak of nature, the strong woman presented no direct threat to the male hierarchy though she stood as a reminder of female physical potential. Bederman points out that mid-nineteenth century society conflated bodily strength with social authority and had, consequently "identified the powerful, large male body of the heavy-weight prizefighter . . . as the epitome of manhood" (8). The strong woman, whose physical appearance and strength were closer to this ideal of manhood than many of the male members of her audience, might have been construed as threatening. The ever-vigilant circus press agents addressed this potential threat by coupling the strong woman's strength with her "traditional" qualities."

The billing of the strong woman truly illustrates the genius of the circus press. The advertisements simultaneously neutralized the strong woman's threat to the social hierarchy, negated the scientific theories of the day that would class her as "primitive" and "lesbian" and promised a thrilling act! The strong woman was billed as "a graceful athlete" and a "beautiful Herculean Venus (possessing) beauty and strength." The lithographs used to advertise the strong woman indicates that they are anything but "mannish." For example, Kate Sandwina is depicted in a scanty costume, with a peaches and cream complexion, femininely posed amongst roses (one of which adorns her beautifully coiffed hair). Lindsay quotes adver-

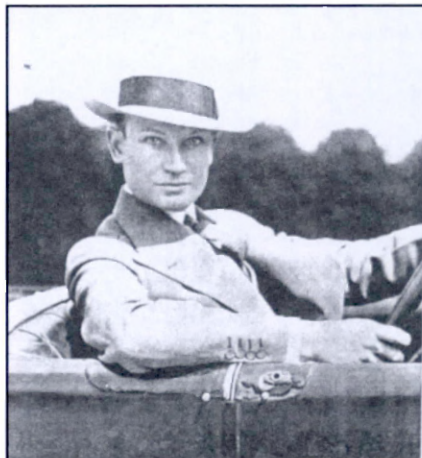
tisements of Sandwina that describe her as "the most beautiful . . . the most skillful . . . the strongest of the world's women" (358). It is the combination of beauty and brawn that made the circus strong woman a popular act.

Press releases about Sandwina were equally enticing; "Kate Carew, a reporter for a New York newspaper, described [her]

as the most bewilderingly beautiful woman I have ever seen. She is as majestic as the Sphinx, as pretty as a valentine, and as wholesome as a great big slice of bread and butter" (Frueh 54). And William Ingliss . . . in a 1911 article for *Harper's Weekly* [reported] Sandwina had "as pretty a face, as sweet a smile and as fine a head of silky brown curls as a man could ask to see . . . but she [also] had the muscles of Thor" (Frueh 54). Press releases such as these and circus bills indicate a determination to balance the strong woman's physical might with more traditional feminine attributes, such as beauty, sweet disposition, and wholesomeness.

Charmion, another popular strong woman (and trapeze artist) of the period, paid homage to another side of the "feminine" sphere in her act. During her vaudeville months, she gained a great deal of fame and notoriety with her "trapeze disrobing" act. Her act was unique; "unlike other strongwomen she didn't

Clyde Vander (Barbette) 1904-1973. From *Ballet Go Round* by Anton Dolin; 305.



Photograph of Madame Yucca. John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

demonstrate her prowess by lifting things; instead she preferred to display her physique [. . .] to the admiring throngs." While she was with the Barnum & Bailey show (1904), Charmion had her portrait done by Frederick W. Glasier. These images capture her strength and femininity. Comparisons between Glasier's images of Charmion and Kate Sandwina and the photographs of Madame Yucca another well-known strong woman of the period indicate the different aspects that each chose to display. Charmion's identity was blatantly sexual--she looks directly at the camera and is often partially disrobed; while Sandwina's was coy and soft with no overt display of physical strength, almost cheese-cake; and Yucca's was strong and verged on the asexual--the gladiator-style costume that she wears is short, but not suggestive. Though the





Albert Hodgini as Miss Daisy. Pfening Archives.

feminine stereotypes that these strong women assumed were different, they all worked to ensure that the women remained unthreatening to the established gender hierarchy while their strength and physiques challenged the notions of the weaker, gentler sex.

The Cross-Dressed Male Performer

"This is a boy, sir. Not a girl. If you're baffled by the difference It might be as well to approach Both with caution"-Joe Orton *What the Butler Saw* (1969)

Male cross-dressing has traditionally been viewed as more threatening to the gender hierarchy than female cross-dressing. The female cross-dresser's desire to be male supports the hierarchy's claim of male superiority while the male's desire to be female challenges it. The dominant-culture reduces the threat of the male cross-dresser by ridiculing him or labeling him a deviant or degenerate. For the most part however, male circus performers who cross-dressed from 1860 to 1930 escaped this treatment.

The male performer's cross-dressing was viewed (when detected or acknowledged) as his costume; it was a necessity of his act. The theory behind the necessity of the male cross-dressed circus performer was that the average male was stronger and more daring than the average female, but the audience craved the thrill and novelty of female circus acts. Senelick points out "there was more thrill in beholding a young girl carrying out perilous or difficult feats" (Changing Room 296).

A 1902 *New York Times* article supports his assertion: "The circus goers [sic] were so much impressed with women who rode horses in ballroom gowns that this form of attraction has been amplified and all the circuses are trying to get riders who can jump through hoops [...] clad in cumbersome costumes [...] that an ordinary woman would find inconvenient even for a drawing room the woman who essays to learn [this act] must be as strong as she is adept, and this is what makes it so hard for a manager to secure riders

An Original LuLu lithograph. Cincinnati Art Museum collection.

of the newly popular class."

This article reiterates that it is not the act itself that is so thrilling, but the fact that a female performs it and



in evening dress no less as the images here indicate the male cross dressed performer who could perform these stunts and "pass" as a woman was an asset to a circus.

Herbert (Berta) Beeson. Pfening Archives.

In order to "pass" the male performer used the gender stereotypes of the day to deceive the audience. The billings for these performers depict their "womanly" qualities: Miss Daisy (Briton Albert Hodgini) was billed as a "graceful Italian

rider" (Draper 5); and "The *Era* called Lulu (Eddie Rivers) a young and beautiful lady" (Gossard 82) and while "performing with Hengler's Cirque [...] Lulu was described as a "young, good-looking and very modest in appearance, rejoicing in a profusion of light hair and dressed tastefully." Bertram Mills billed Barquette (Vander Clyde) as "gorgeous [and] indescribable" and Berta (Herbert) Beeson was described as "that graceful chiffon-clad person" (Artist's Dance). These descriptions clearly indicate the male cross-dressed performer's use of gender stereotypes to facilitate their disguise. They are young, beautiful, graceful, modest, and chiffon clad.

This use of gender stereotype reinforced the existing gender hierarchy and, at the same time, indicated the constructed status of gender. As Dekker points out, "one's sex is determined by physical characteristics; one's gender is determined by clothing, behavior, speech, and all the



other external characteristics" (48). The male cross-dressed performer understood this constructed status of gender and incorporated the gender stereotypes used to enforce the gender hierarchy to deceive their audience.

The origins of several of these performers further indicate the learned status of gender. Most of them began their cross-dressing at an early age. Barbette, for example, was 14 when he began performing as a female. And Spencer Stokes, who "created" Ella Zoyara from his seven-year-old apprentice, Omar Kingsley, began the transformation by dressing the boy as a girl and providing him with female companions. Furthermore, he had the boy instructed in "sewing, embroidery, and other diversions of the female sex" (Kitchen 24). And when George Farini began dressing his adopted son, Eddie Rivers, as a girl and shooting him from his cannon, he created Lulu, "the eighth wonder of the world" (Gossard 82). The early tutelage of these performers in the "feminine arts" helped to create a more convincing illusion because they had no "masculine" traits to unlearn.

Obviously the creation of a fictional person had some drawbacks; for the deception to be effective this female performer had to exist outside the ring as well as inside. The life that their female personae took on varied. For example Zoyara seemed to exist as a female in and out of the ring. This is indicated by the fact that some of his fellow performers were unaware of his "true" sex: "Richard Hemmings [. . .] stated that he performed with Ella [. . .] and then traveled through England with [her] and never had the slightest suspicion that Ella was not a girl" (Kitchen 24). Beeson created the illusion of a feminine existence via reports in the press such as; "a maid dressed in a Frenchy [sic] frock accompanies the wire artist to and from the rings [. . .] and seven trunks of wardrobe are carried on tour" (Artist's Dance). The

deceptive nature of the cross-dressers' act complicated their lives outside of the ring. The public's discovery of the deception would destroy the illusion that they created.



Julian Eltinge (1883-1941). Pfenning Archives.

It is interesting that Barbette's act, which ended in the revelation of his "true" sex, "was not affected by this disclosure. His 'true' identity as a male seemed instead to create a supernatural reality to his female alter ego: 'It is only when he puts on his blonde wig [. . .] that he assumes all the gestures of a woman doing her hair. He gets up, walks about and puts on his rings. The metamorphosis is complete. Jekyll is Hyde. Yes, Hyde. For I'm frightened. I turn away' (Crosland 222). The fear that Barbette's transformation creates in his male observer could be read as this observer's reaction to the realization of the ambiguous and constructed status of gender. Barbette's cross-dressing is too successful.

This success is indicated in descriptions of his "unveiling" during which he must convince the duped audience of his masculinity: "Cocteau describes the [. . .] many embarrassed, disbelieving faces [. . .] Barbette had introduced his act by miming the essence of femininity, he ended it by playing an extremely masculine role" (Crowson 103). Barbette knew that a public deception as large as a female alter ego could not stay secret for long and, therefore, he refused to hide his masculinity and instead, made it the climax of his act.

Other male cross-dressed performers also realized that their deception could not go on indefinitely. Lulu's cross-dressing stint for example was "played up as a novel publicity stunt," the illusion of Lu Lu's sex is now dispelled. The beautiful Lu Lu of 1871 is the same as the wondrous of 1879; but the performance of the Lu

Lu of 1879 is entirely distinct from that of the Lu Lu of the former period. When Beeson's deception was made public, he began to bill himself as "Berta Beeson, the Julian Eltinge of the tight wire" (Spiegel). This comparison between himself and the respected Eltinge who cross-dressed onstage, but maintained a "heman" persona off-stage allowed Beeson to confirm the performance aspect of his cross-dressing and proclaim his masculinity. And "when [his] maleness was eventually discovered" by the circus press [. . .] Hodgini's publicity photographs confirmed his identity as a decent family man with a wife and two children" (Davis 116).

Only Zoyara refused to "act the man" off-stage. Though he married twice and fathered four children, Zoyara continued to cross-dress both in and out of the ring. He refused to conform to the dominant culture's gender assignments and, as a result, received both profits and threats from the public. The question of Zoyara's "true" sex and the publicity that it generated was profitable for the circus. Audiences flocked to the show to see if they could determine Zoyara's sex. At the same time, there was element of anger at the deception. This is indicated in a section from the February 11, 1860 issue of the *New York Clipper* which seems to threaten Zoyara with the potential consequences of his continued masquerade: "If the imposition is not soon stopped, we fear there will be a public manifestation and examination [of Zoyara's person] not set down on the program" (Kitchen 26). This implied threat however did not deter Zoyara who continued to perform as a woman until 1867 and "even after giving up the charade it is said that he continued to do needlework and would sit in his dressing tent wearing a female's wrapper" (Kitchen 28). Zoyara's attachment to the feminine aspect of his person combined with the fact of his early tutelage in that aspect indicates that gender is a learned (rather than innate) behavior.

Although Zoyara refused to kneel to the dominant society's insistence of male behavior, other male cross-dressed performers felt the necessity to do so. The adoption of "manly" behavior by Beeson and Hodgini

reflects society's conflation of gender and sex and its insistence on innate differences between male and female. But it is Barquette's performance that indicates that he not only understood the constructed status of gender and its power, but openly ridiculed it: "Only at the end of the



Ella Zoyara, lady rider. Pfening Archives.

performance, when he removed his wig, did he dispel the illusion, at which time he mugged and flexed in a masculine manner to emphasize the success of his earlier deception" (Curlee 1). This display of masculinity that was used to "prove" Barquette's maleness mocked that same masculinity as performance; the show that Barquette recognized it to be.

The strong women and the cross-dressed men of the American circus between 1860 and 1930 contributed to the nation's changing perceptions of gender. They contradicted the gender stereotypes of their day from the safety of the fringe in which they lived. As social outsiders and performers, their actions reflected and challenged the dominant culture's values without posing a discernable threat to them. Their influence was subtle. They planted the seed of possibility in the circus audience's mind; the seeds that would take root and create new attitudes about gender roles and the hierarchy that they supported.

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LEW GRAHAM

Circus Side Show Manager And Big Top Announcer

By Dr. Robert J. Loeffler

The grand old gentleman circus historian, Earl Chapin May, wrote an interesting and informative biographical sketch of Lew Graham, side show manager and big top announcer. Portions of what May wrote are included herein:¹ "Lew Graham was an institution when I was a boy. I have seen and heard him demonstrate ever since I can remember. So have you.

"He is and has been for 34 years the official circus announcer. His job is to catch and hold the attention of from 5,000 to 15,000 circus fans solely with his voice and personality.

"I begged him to tell me how he did it. Lew balked. He'd had all the glory he wants. Finally, he loosened up. 'It's partly inheritance, partly training, and partly horse sense,' he said. 'I was born to good health 57 years ago in the capital of the world, Crawfordsville, Indiana.'

"At the age of 21 I found myself with a circus. William Henshaw, of Hager & Henshaw, the 'Sam Sunday School' Smith, taught me some of the tricks of the circus orator. I began to ballyhoo for the side show.'

"Acting as official announcer in the big show performance is a difficult job, although to hold it the announcer must understand mass psychology, just as the side show ballyhoo man does. He never gets red in the face. He never shouts. Who? Lew Graham, official circus announcer, who has talked to 86,000,000 persons and means to resist radio until it is 100,000,000.

"Ten thousand circus fans in the coal country of Pennsylvania show very much the same reactions as 10,000 circus fans in the wheat country of Minnesota, yet it requires a little different attack each time. I try to hold them. And my time, for each announcement, is limited to one minute. I lose some time in getting



Lew Graham on the Ringling Bros. Circus lot in Temple, Texas on October 11, 1913. Pfening Archives.

their attention. So, you see, I must pick my words with great care.'

"I have said in a general way all crowds are alike, and I should add that the college crowd is decidedly different. College boys are naturally hecklers. They love to kid anything or anybody. The circus official announcer is their meat. The Yale students at New Haven are especially hard for me to handle, especially after I have made one or two announcements and they have me spotted.

"Lew Graham now weighs 220 pounds--a little less than he has weighed in other years [1924]. He is six feet tall and measures 46 inches around the chest. He is not a heavy eater, is temperate in his habits. He smokes two or three cigars each Sunday, on a working day only one after the night show. He has never taken singing lessons or studied under a teacher of voice control. He is seldom troubled with hoarseness and

has never had bronchitis or pneumonia. His voice is as good at the end as it is at the beginning of the season.

"In the past 34 years at least 80,000,000 Americans have heeded Lew Graham's voice. During each of 34 consecutive circus seasons Lew Graham has announced twice each day.

"This table will, therefore, give a good idea of Lew Graham's vocal prowess.

"Barnum & Bailey Circus 1890-1899, inclusive: 10 seasons of 170 days each totalling 17,000,000.

"Ringling Brothers' Circus 1900-1912, inclusive: 13 seasons of 170 days each totalling 33,150,000.

"Ringling Brothers' Circus (Under Enlarged Big Top) 1913-1918, inclusive: 6 seasons of 170 days each, totaling 17,850,000.

"Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Shows Combined 1919-1923 totalling, inclusive: 5 seasons of 170 days each totalling 18,700,000.

"Grand total for 34 seasons: 86,700,000.

"This does not include the season of 1924, which, as this is written, is unfinished. Nor does it include the three winter seasons at the Olympic, London, which is almost as large as Madison Square Garden. Nor does it include the winter's campaign in Chicago when, in conjunction with Sidney Smith of 'Andy Gump' fame, Lew talked the Chicagoans into buying a half million dollars' worth of Liberty Bonds.

"Nor does it include all the hundreds of thousands during each of the many circus seasons who have listened to Lew Graham's side show oratory and have left the lot without seeing the big show, largely because they didn't have the price. For, until this season, Lew did his regular 'inside announcements' for the big show and also put in from four to six

hours each day ballyhooing outside for the side show. And his voice has never failed him! It's a pleasant, musical voice, too. And he never used a megaphone!

"Some day some historian will arise and write the life of Lew Graham, last of the town criers.

"It is only a question of months before Lew and all his kind will be permanently attached to amplifiers, headsets, loud speakers, and other 20th century appliances. But Lew Graham will have left a world's record."

Graham toured with Barnum & Bailey between 1889 and 1899 and joined Ringling Brothers in 1900 and remained with them until well past 1924, except in 1903.

Sverre and Fay Braathen in their delightful article, "They Made It Click," wrote: "Lew became the big show announcer. His deep resonant voice, magnified only by his cupped hand, carried to the farthest reaches of the huge tent as he told of the wonders of this or that act which the audience was about to witness."²

Fred Bradna tells the tale that the great Codona, aerialist with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey:³ . . . "climbed to the high pedestal, wiping perspiration from his hands with a towel. This signaled a special announcement: 'Ladies and Gentlemen,' said Lew Graham, the ring announcer, 'the greatest aerialist of all time will now accomplish what no other person in the world can do—the triple somersault in mid-air.'"

Bradna recalled that while he knew few side show artists, he knew the two most celebrated side show managers, Lew Graham and Clyde Ingalls, the one time husband of Lillian Leitzel and Bradna wrote that Graham's requirements, "in hiring sideshow talent, were threefold: the abnormality must be remarkable, if possible unique; it must be exploitable by an accompanying talent or dexterity; and it must be inoffensive to public taste. Thus the fat lady may not be a repulsive mass of blubber; she must be delightfully curvaceous. . . ." Bradna also remembered that: "Jake Posey, as a taciturn Indiana hustler, drove James A. Bailey's 40-horse hitch for five seasons of European barnstorming. Incidentally, he won many a bet by

knocking a fly off a stable wall from 12 feet away with a squirt of tobacco juice, and Lew Graham tried for several years to figure out a way to clean up that act enough to put it in the side show. Jake was willing but his accuracy was not infallible with other liquids."

Graham joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West in their tour across the seas in 1903;⁷ one of his duties was to manage the privileges and before leaving New York he called at the office of the *Clipper* along with others departing by steamship for overseas; he returned to the States in December and after a few days, returned to his home for a rest.

The Ringlings soon realized that they had made a serious mistake in allowing Graham to leave their organization. In the summer of 1903 Otto Ringling wrote Graham, and the exchange of letters and cablegrams that followed disclosed that all of the latter's demands as to salary, living conditions and full authority over the side show were met. This indicates he had quickly become a key man with the Ringling organization. He continued with it until the merger of the Ringling and the Barnum & Bailey Circus. Lew became the big show announcer for the Greatest Show on Earth.⁷

Graham's correspondence with Otto Ringling of the Ringling Circus is quoted here and it dates between

Lou Graham and some of his midget attractions in 1907. Pfening Archives.



July 5, 1903 and October 27, 1908; the Braathon's circus collection at Illinois State University, however, doesn't hold the letters to Graham from Ringling:

"Cardiff, Wales. July 5, 1903. Mr. Otto Ringling

"Dear Sir,

"Yours dated June 17 was sent on to me here by our 'advance' and came to me last Wednesday. Replying to same I beg to say, that I too always have had a kindly feeling toward your firm and the show, both during and since my engagement with you.

"However, that is only mentioned in reply to your inquiry as to whether or not I reciprocate your expressed kindly mood. I agree with you in saying the distance is great and correspondence naturally slow. Consequently, I too will be brief.

"I will accept for the time from April 1 to Nov. 15 season salary of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) and the usual traveling expenses, sleeping accommodations to be as stated in your letter of June 17, 1903. I would not care to make a change for only one season but would do so if you meet me in agreeing to make the arrangement for one or more seasons. I do not wish to appear dictatorial or assume any undue authority, Mr. Otto, but I must be candid and say that I have a free hand in engaging all people for the side show, inside and out, and would not have Borelloh or Gruber at any price. I can get better men for less money. Of course, I would keep within the money limit in organizing the side show and can get a very strong show together for a reasonable price. In the event of us closing this deal, I would be in America early in December but would request this matter be kept confidential until Dec. 1. I enclose route in case you wish to cable me, or the following address is permanent until Dec. 1, 1903--or if you accept my proposition you can cable 'accepted' as per route and mail contracts to permanent address. I am yours truly, Lew Graham, 32 Warwick Mansion, Warwick Street, W. Kensington, London."

From Portsmouth, England on August 9, 1903 Graham wrote:

"Ringling Bros.

"My dear Sirs,

"I am in receipt of your cable from Logan, Utah to Southampton, England which reads, 'accepted' Ringling.

"I presume letter or contract or both are by this time on the way to my London address awaiting same I am, Yours Sincerely, Lew Graham."

On a Buffalo Bill Wild West letterhead Graham wrote to Ringling Bros. from London, England on October 27, 1903:

"Ringling Bros.

"My dear Sirs,

"I am sailing on Saturday, Oct. 31, S. S. *Minatoka* Atlantic Transport Line. Will arrive New York Monday, Nov. 9 and will most likely remain there two or three weeks so as to see Flagg and one or two others who may be in town. Irani and Annino will probably be there during my stay.

"In case this reaches you before your season closes, it might be well for you to tell them to see me at the address below please. Will you send me some official paper and a few contract forms also to this address. I trust all goes well with you. I am, Yours truly, Lew Graham, 101 East 25 St., New York."

Graham wrote from Sheffield, England on October 13, 1903:

"Ringling Bros.

"My dear Sirs,

"Yours from San Luis Obispo, Cal., in hand in due time and contents carefully noted. You will please find contract enclosed and signed. I, like yourselves, do not require as a mere matter of form, stating amount of salary and one or two minor details. I am not inclined to insist from you paying Chicago Hotel but will talk to you regarding same when we meet. I, too, think it best to close with Irani and Annino, for next season if there is any likelihood of them going elsewhere. Though I really do not think they can (for more money).

"By the time this will have reached you I do not care if the fact of my signing with you is known. I merely speak of this so the people whom you speak to for next season will know, unless you deem it the wiser plan not to speak of it for a time. I shall wait until my 'ad' appears to fix for band, door talkers, etc. If this is possible and even probable that Griffin may remain here next season as my suc-



Graham in the ticket box of the 1908 Ringling side show. Pfening Archives.

cessor, I will know soon. I will close verbally with Giant and Midget in London soon as my road season is finished. I have engaged one man for side show box. He is an Englishman and is a good all day worker. I will keep you posted as to my movements and probable time of my arrival in N.Y. Should like to have Old Stub of course. I am yours Sincerely, Lew Graham."

Writing on a Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows letterhead from Chicago on March 12, 1908 Graham said:

"Ringling Bros.

"My dear Sirs,

"I enclose herewith 12 S. S. contracts 1908. Complete while not stipulated in contract of Dunmore; he does pay \$42 on ptg. As per recent letter to me, which I will retain for future reference, if necessary at the time I sent contracts to him. I did not know whether he paid ptg. last season or not. I am Yours Truly, Lew Graham"

Graham's duties as side show manager involved a multitude of details including the hiring of acts. This December 8, 1913 letter from the Ringlings to Graham in the Pfening Archives is an example:

"Dear Sir:

"Here is a letter from Prince Mungo. He makes good in parade on one of the cages. Should you engage him be sure and have it understood that he is to go in parade. Of course, as you know, he is a 'dinge' and would have to sleep with the side show band. As far as him being an irrogot is concerned, it is a fake. He is simply a 'dinge' with a good make-up. He made good with us with the Forepaugh Show, mostly so on

account of his sales of perfumed shells. His performance in the side show was all right as a fill-in stage. We paid him \$10. per week and we got one half of the sales on the perfumed he goods he sold."

This exchange of letters with the Ringlings about the size of the stages is an example of their interaction.

In preparation for the 1914 season Graham wrote the Ringlings on December 26, 1913: "Please find attached here to a list of the stages for 1914, not complete however, as I expect two or three more in the near future.

"R. Roy Pope, [the leader of the side show band] requests an advance of \$200 to reach him by January 10. I have written him that I would make this request known to you, but I made him no promises. Pope has had money advanced each of the seasons he was in your employ, as high as \$250 on one occasion. If you decide to favor him I will be responsible for the amount.

"Please note some of the stages in this list are marked 'made from,' etc. which means we have a carpet and drapery which can be cut down to suit as nearly all from 1913 are in fine condition, except two small stages. Yours truly, Lew Graham."

Charles Ringling answered: "Baraboo, Wisconsin. December 30th, 1913

"Mr. Lew Graham

600 West 163rd Street

New York City, NY

"Dear Sir:

"Your letter of Dec. 26th received.

In this letter you ask us if we will advance Roy Pope the band leader, \$200. There is nothing in doing this. In fact it is a detriment. We made a rule a few year ago not to advance in the future anyone any salary. We cut this out with all the performers and I don't see why we should not cut this out with Roy Pope. In fact to do justice to ourselves and our performers we must do this, as we invariably give them the answer that we out this out with all people, and Roy Pope is no better than any of the rest. As you know we are running a circus, and are not doing a banking business. I mention these facts to you so you will understand our position in



the matter. We do not doubt but what Roy Pope would pay this \$200.00 providing he was alive and could travel with the show. Were he not in a position to travel with the show we would not got our \$200.00 back. You know this as well as we do.

"In regards to the stages, as I understand it you will still have two or three freaks to engage yet. Is this correct? I did this work last season in order to have the stages and covers in good shape, but it is almost impossible for me to change these stages around and one size to the other. This makes a lot of work to change these stages. Now for instance, the snake act: You have a stage marked 6 x 8. We cannot change last years stage and draperies from what they were. I don't just remember what they were, but I think they were 6 x 6. You had better figure the stages so as to leave last years stages just as they were and let me know just what stages you wish to add to last year's stages and give me the sizes of them and then I can figure them out and go ahead with this stage proposition. It is mighty hard for me here in Baraboo to figure out these stages and change any of them, so the better way is as stated above leaves these last year's stages as they are and give me the additional sizes of the stages you will wish to add to last years, but these draperies the way they were made are hard to change from the sizes they were in before. This information I must have as soon as possible. Yours very truly, Ringling Bros., per Al."

On January 10, 1914 Graham wrote the Ringlings about the 1914 stages.

"I enclose complete list of side show stages and the people except ticket men and door tenders. These people are all signed and you have all contracts in Baraboo, except J. Clark and Myers and Myers, which will reach Baraboo shortly.

"On the strength of Mr. Richard Pettots assurance I shall order a painting [banner] of Mlle Gabrielle."

Lew Graham, the circus man in 1913. Pfening Archives.

The side show people and stages for 1914 as sent to the Ringlings were: "Band 10 x 14 feet; Sascha, wire haired act 7 x 9; Snakes, 6 x 8; Myers, colored team, 5 x 7; Broom King, 5 x 7; Karo, missing link, 6 x 5; Mlle. Gabrielle, half lady 6 x 5; and Princess Tiny, midget, 6 x 5; MacWilkie, long beard piper, 4 x 6; Charlie Tripp, armless man, 4 x 6; J. Clarke, tattooed scalp, 4 x 6; Francis Lentini, tree legged boy, 4 x 6; E. Trucks, albino girl, 4 x 6; Bonita, midget fat girl, 4 x 6 and Francis Walters, blue man, 6 x 5."

Earl Chapin May commented on Lew Graham's early use of radio and research reveals that in 1925 the *New York Times* "announced the fact in its column entitled 'Circus Boasts Roar for Radio Audience.'" The article points out the radio idea, suggested by press agent Dexter Fellows, was tried in 1924 with success. However, the *Times*, as far as is known, did not

Lew Graham in his Derby hat selling side show tickets on Ringling Bros. Pfening Archives.



afford any space to that 1924 event. George Chindahl in his book writes that, "The following year, 1924, Lew Graham of Ringling-Barnum & Bailey gave a radio talk in the larger cities about the modern circus, its transportation and operation. Sells-Floto used radio broadcasts to advertise its Chicago engagement in 1922.⁵

Lew Graham passed away at age 73 on September 19, 1935, therefore, he was probably born in 1852. Gail Mylur of Middleton, New York, Thrall Library wrote that:

"My co-worker searched the local newspaper for an obituary of Lew Graham, and did not find one.⁶

Dexter Fellows states that Graham died in Middletown sanitarium. However, the Director of Medical Records, Sheryl A. De La Garza, RHIA, stated: "Please be advised that we have no record on the above named person at the Middletown Psychiatric Center, Middletown, New York, November 2, 2000. If the person was treated under another name, please supply full name, including aliases/maiden name, date of birth, and dates of admission/discharge. There is no evidence to suggest the latter." Circumstances surrounding his death remain a mystery.

It was also reported that he was buried in Lynn, Massachusetts but according to the City Clerk's Office, Robert G. Furlong, clerk, there is no record of his burial in this Massachusetts city.⁷

References

1. Earl Chapin May, How the Boss Ballyhoover Holds 'Em, *Collier's the National Weekly*, July 12, 1924, Volume 74: 8-9.
2. *Bandwagon*, March/April 1973
3. Fred Bradna and Hartzell Spence, *The Big Top* 1952, pp. 195-196. Simon and Schuster, New York, New York.
4. *New York Clipper*, December 12, 1902.
5. *New York Times*, April 5, 1925, p. 15, cols. 1-4.
6. Courtesy, Gail Mylur, librarian, Middletown, New York.
7. Courtesy, Robert G. Furlong, City Clerk, City Hall, Lynn, Massachusetts.

Half A Century Under The Big Top

PART TWO

By R. M. Harvey

The following material was written by R. M. Harvey from his memories of his years in the circus business. Some of the articles are not completely historically correct.

Strange facts about James Bailey and his 40-horse team publicity.

From washing dishes in a restaurant as a kid in Des Moines for \$1.75 per week to the handling of Madison Square Garden in New York City for the Greatest Show on Earth, was the career of my young life.

When I was engaged to contract for the Great Wallace Circus I did not know anything about the show, much less about my work. However, when I reported to Peru, Indiana, to start my work I found that I was not working for the Great Wallace Show but for the Cook and Whitby Circus and that it was much larger than I had expected.

The railroad cars had been newly painted and were lettered in big letters with the Cook and Whitby name. It was to play the larger cities. That was my circus surprise number one.

At the end of my two years as a circus agent I had discovered, unbeknown to myself, that I had made quite a reputation as a contracting agent, having achieved some remarkable deals that caused the owners of other big shows to be interested in me.

Unsolicited letters came from the Adam Forepaugh, the Ringlings and the Barnum and Bailey circuses, with offers for the following season. From that time, to the end of my circus career, I always had offers awaiting me.

I accepted the offer of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, which

came direct from Bailey personally over his own signature. He had offered me \$25 per week more salary than any of the others. I was to report in New York City for the work the first of January. I had never been in city that before.

He seemed to be a man of destiny. He did big things in a big way. I soon discovered that it was up to me to listen, to obey and to do. Bailey had departed from his humble home in Michigan when he was but a lad of about ten years. He wanted adventure and his parents seemed willing to let him find it.

He joined a small show owned by a man by the name of Bailey. Now the boy's true name was McGinnis but he was rather ashamed of it and never told that name to anyone.

Since he never spoke his name, the

James Anthony Bailey (1847-1906). All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



people about him just called him "Bailey," after the owner of the show. He moved about and was with several small affairs but always went by the name of Bailey.

In New York Bailey and I had unusual opportunities to become acquainted personally. We both got to the circus office on 34th Street early every morning and while waiting for the others to report, he and I would visit. One morning I was much surprised to have him ask me to go to the New York Central station to meet his brother, who was coming from Michigan.

He then told me, "I had better give you my brother's name." He then told me their family name was McGinnis and he pledged me not to repeat it to anyone.

He gave me a good description of this brother and said I could identify him by a large cane he always carried. I met him and brought him to the office. I was the only person connected with the Barnum and Bailey Circus that ever knew that name McGinnis. A few years later, just before he became a partner with P. T. Barnum he went to court in Cincinnati and had his name legally changed to Bailey.

Bailey was small in stature, but he never hesitated to do big, unusual things. He had just brought the great circus back from a five-year tour of Europe, and had enlarged his show for future dates in America.

It was beyond question the greatest circus ever seen in America. It has never been excelled to this day. It was his most remarkable aggressive spirit that caused Barnum to become his partner.

Barnum practically made

James A. Bailey

James Anthony McGinnis was born on July 4, 1847 in Detroit, Michigan, at a location that is now Cobo Hall. At age thirteen he went to work for Frederick H. Bailey, an agent for the Robinson & Lake Circus. It was here that he adopted the Bailey name.

At age 28 he bought an interest in Hemmings & Cooper's Circus, the title was changed to Cooper & Bailey. He later bought the Howes' Great London show. Starting with the 1881 season Cooper & Bailey was merged with the P. T. Barnum show. Bailey became a partner of James L. Hutchinson and Barnum.

Following a very successful 1897 tour Bailey organized Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. in 1899 in London, England. By 1894 Bailey had become a partner in the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. Following Adam Forepaugh's death Bailey acquired the Forepaugh show, which was combined with Sells Bros. in 1896. With the Barnum show, Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Forepaugh-Sells Bailey provided strong opposition to the Ringling brothers. Following a five-year tour of Europe Bailey returned to America for the 1903 season. Bailey went all out to produce an outstanding circus for the 1903 tour.

The Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth continued under Bailey. He died on April 11, 1906 at his home in Mount Vernon, New York. In October 1907 the stockholders of Barnum & Bailey Limited sold the show to the Ringling brothers for \$410,000. Bailey's share of the Forepaugh-Sells show was also sold to the Ringling Bros.

The Forty-horse Hitch

In 1897 the Barnum & Bailey Circus introduced a forty-horse hitch as a feature of its parade. James Thomas was the driver of the big team. The first parade with the large hitch was in Brooklyn, New York on April 26. The team pulled the Five Graces bandwagon.

The Five Graces with the big hitch was featured in parades during the five-year tour of Europe. When the Barnum show returned to America the team was featured with the new Two Hemisphere bandwagon in the 1903 parade. The final use of the large team was in 1904.

Bailey a present of his interest. At the time of his death, Bailey owned exclusively the Barnum and Bailey Circus and the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show.

I was most happy to be invited by such a man to join his staff. When I walked into the Barnum and Bailey office in New York City for the first time to meet Bailey, I did so with much fear and trembling, not knowing how long I would last there.

Bailey was very democratic and made me feel at ease and gave me much self-confidence. He talked in a soft voice, seemed not to be excitable. He a dry smoker. Always had a cigar in his mouth but never did light it.

He would use the same cigar for half a day unless something went wrong or he became displeased or angry, at which time he would chew up the cigar entirely. He was a man who knew what he wanted to do and with his mind once set to do a certain thing, he generally did it.

All circuses seemed to want some special attraction that would help

the publicity department. For instance the Great Adam Forepaugh show for years featured a \$10,000 beauty in its street parade and it proved to be a great attraction.

Even the little Orton Brothers

Circus, in its first days, advertised the fact that it carried a trained leopard, which rode on a seat beside the driver of a wagon in its street parade.

Even that lowly attraction gave show much publicity, since farmers and the public in general lined the roadside.

Bailey resolved to have a team of forty horses to pull his great chariot in parades.

He arranged with the Kelley Stables at Minneapolis, also with William P. Hall at Lancaster, Missouri and with Mat Smith at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to assemble a team of forty horses, to be made up of eight different breeds.

They were to be of the very best horseflesh obtainable in the country, were to be perfect in figure, in color, in size and well matched. They were to be arranged in lines of four in ten lines, thus comprising forty horses.

Each set of four horses was to be a different color, all of the four in the line to be in the same size and weight. Ten lines of four horses thus arranged, would make a wonderful picture. It required several months of selection and work to assemble this team. The horses were selected in various parts of the country.

The superintendent of stock, Mat Smith, with the Barnum and, Bailey circus, had his own farm at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Bailey al-

The Barnum & Bailey Forty-Horse hitch.



ways arranged with him to care of the circus stock on his farm during the winter months.

During this time Smith would look after the replacement of stock that was often required before the next season.

Most of this forty-horse team was composed of pedigreed stock, shipped to Smith's farm and preparations were made there for the making of special and elaborate harness to be made and used in the parade.

The forty-horse team cost \$16,000. It was to be used to pull the finest band chariots ever used in a parade. The big concert band of the show, with Carl Clair as musical director, and 26 men, were to ride in the elaborate, gold glittering wagon.

So with this massive, gold covered band chariot, the thousands of dollars worth of harness on the back of the 40 horses, the \$16,000 worth of horseflesh, the 26 attractively uniformed musicians on the wagon, this outfit of 40 horses attracted great attention and much publicity.

So great, in many of cities, the crowd that gathered on the show lot early in the morning to see this team of 40-horses hitched together.

It caused great delay in the starting of the parade, since the police of the city where the show was, had to be called out to restrain the crowds and control the people while the great team was being assembled and hitched to the wonderful work of art that it was to drag through the city streets and to receive the welcoming plaudits of the public as it hailed the arrival in the town of the Greatest Show on Earth.

To avoid this unexpected trouble, the forty horse team was carried on the show only one year. This team was skillfully controlled by Frank Ault, its principal driver, who had two helpers on the drivers seat with him.

The two front lines of the 40-horse team were controlled by lines direct from the driver as well as the last line of four horses directly in front of the band chariot.

Watching circus amazes some big city newsmen.

It was not until Hagenbeck-Wallace, the third largest circus in the country, had arrived in Jackson,

Mississippi, that through the courtesy of the local newspaper men, these eastern gentlemen of the press discovered what they had missed in life.

President Taft was making a round trip tour of the country, south, west and east, on a special railroad train of eight cars. These men were his guests for the trip as far as transportation was concerned. There was a dining car on the train, but the guests were required to pay for their own meals on that diner.

A month prior to the show date I had contacted Jackson and learned that Taft's train would be in Jackson on our date. I then told the editors of the *Morning Ledger* and the *Evening News*, that they could use the circus on that date as entertainment for the visiting newsmen with the presidential train.

The President and his secretaries would attend to the work in the private cars of the train. The newsmen with the President were really enjoying a vacation trip with the President.

They had nothing to do, just as long as they were convenient in case of any emergency. They always left two of their number standing by near the President's rooms to pick up information regarding any thing of importance and this information they would relay to each other. Thus the group was free.

The Taft train had arrived the

William Howard Taft, the 27th President of the United States.



evening before from Shreveport, Louisiana. The local newsmen invited the visitors to be on hand in the morning when the show train arrived. They were up with the town kids early to see all there was to see.

You must remember these traveling newsmen had seen what was called a circus many times in Madison Square Garden, but they had never seen a circus under a big tent.

What they saw that day was all a revelation to them. They were of course surprised to see the kitchen and dining tent serving breakfast to the hundreds of employees within minutes after those heavy wagons had pulled on the grounds.

After breakfast they walked only a few blocks to the show, which was located immediately back at the old state house building on a big tract of ground where Mississippi had its state fair.

As in other southern cities, they did not have any permanent buildings on their fair grounds but displayed an exhibits under a group of tents.

This show ground belonged to the state and we paid a nominal rental charge in cash. We did not have to give any passes on the ground contract as the secretary of state told me at the time, if we gave any passes, it would require too many in order to treat all alike.

These newsmen saw this tract of ground turned into a fairyland of amusement within three hours after the first big wagon had pulled on to it.

The newsmen had never seen a big center pole raised high in the air. They had never seen with what speed the stakes were driven into the ground by human hands.

They had never seen how the electric wiring was laid out and had never understood with what accuracy the many big wagons carrying our freight were spotted. They had never seen the big horse tents, covering hundreds of valuable horses, raised, or how the blacksmith shop was conveniently located and the big wardrobe tents for the performers, was spotted nearby.

Neither had the men seen how skillfully and quickly the seats for thousands of people were put in

place. Then the dressing tents, big in size, with one half devoted to about one hundred women with the show, and rest for the use of many men. The tent for the clowns which was called "clown alley" apparently was lost in the shuffle of tents.

For the performance with the help of local editors, seats were arranged in the center of the shady side of the big top for the visitors, directly in front of where the big circus concert band would play their concert of four numbers prior to the start of the show.

There was a group of middle-aged men touring the country on a private train, hailing from great cities. They were university men, highly cultured, almost perfectly educated, and capable of associating with public officials, from the President of the country, down to the dogcatcher in their home ward.

They could enjoy the sermons by Dr. Fosdick of the Riverside Church, could discuss Shakespeare and Bacon, argue about the football coaches, fuss about the best baseball players, predict who would be the next governor of New York, or what horse would win the Kentucky Derby.

However, with all at the above qualifications, these men had a serious deficit in their education. It was not until a certain date in October that they discovered this fact. They had never seen a circus being located,

The Hagenbeck-Wallace performance was one of the very best. It of course included the Hagenbeck animals, the big elephant act of eighteen elephants and a great variety of high-class circus acts.

As the performance went on, the visitors would keep me busy with their questions. I remember particularly one of the men from the *New York Times*.

He was the most fastidious of the bunch. Never removed the gloves from his hands. Very dignified and sedate but he never did run out of questions. He simply could not understand how we could tear down the train, get to the next town and then be doing the same in that town at the same time we were doing it here.

Our next town was to be Meriden,

THE HAGENBECK-WALLACE SHOWS COMPANY	
LICENSE	Know All Men by These Presents:
	That the above named Company is hereby Licensed and permitted to exhibit the same in said
	State of _____ of _____ ss: _____ of _____ for _____ day...
	only on or about the _____ day of _____ 1919, in consideration of his paying into the
	Treasury of said _____ of _____ \$ _____ DOLLARS
<p><small>If said sum is not paid, then this License shall be null and void, but when paid to be in full force and effect. The above sum to be in full for the use of streets necessary for making street parades, showing and displaying their Exhibitions, Menagerie, Side Shows, Concert, Exhibitions, Egyptian and Turkish dancing Exhibitions, Refrainments and County Rides, the selling of Toy Balloons, Cane and Sticks on the streets and all other things and acts necessary, belonging to said exhibition as a part thereof, in order to facilitate the publicly required to hereto the coming of this show, advance advertising, such as bill posting, lithographing, programming, and all outdoor displays, are also granted under this license. Also erection of bill boards when necessary. But no separate charge for advance advertising, bill posting, etc., is to be exacted where a performance is not given.</small></p> <p>Given under my hand and seal this _____ day of _____, 1919.</p>	

Mississippi and I invited all of them to come over there and they would see.

The men of the *Morning Ledger* and the *Evening News* did a good job, in helping me to entertain this New York bunch.

While the day provided me with much amazement and amusement of an unusual kind, it had not pleased President Taft so completely.

Mr. Taft had had a busy day, had kept his three secretaries very busy. He had his meals on the dining car but that evening he was a guest at the governor's mansion at a party given by the governor.

It was then that the President noticed the absence of his company who generally were present at such events. Mr. Taft opened up on the crowd present. Even called the governor down for not telling him of the circus in town. The governor of course explained he did not suppose the president would be interested in a circus. To which Mr. Taft replied he never missed a circus if he could get to it.

He further explained that as long as he had lived in Washington and been in public office, even since he had been in the White House, he never missed a circus that came to Washington.

I will never forget our circus date in Jackson, Mississippi.

Circus forced to make shady deals with officials.

I have learned by experience that if you want a special favor from a city, that it is best just to play along with local fellows in their own way and do not ask any questions. The local men know how to accomplish what you want and still stay within the law, although you may yourself question about the law.

It fell to my lot to handle the Jersey City situation several times

A license contract used by Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1919.

and I secured the same results each time and it was all worked out systematically and thoroughly within the law.

That city has a law fixing the circus licenses for one day at from \$100 to \$1,000 per day, the license committee to determine the amount.

They always have five men on the license committee. Three Democrats and two Republicans, or the reverse. Just how the committee was divided politically did not mean anything because regardless of the number of Democrats or Republicans on the committee, the game was always played the same way.

Every time I made Jersey City, this license committee was always composed of five saloonkeepers. They were not of the higher type of men either, but rather of the lower type and the floors or their saloons were sure to be carpeted with cinders or sawdust and the place would be dimly lighted.


In fact it would resemble the right kind of a place for any crime of small or higher degree to be committed. I would be escorted around to each of the five men on the Committee to meet them and to discuss certain details, which were never discussed in public.

I would be advised that to play the game with assurance of success, I must remember each of the men with a gift of at least \$50—that would be \$250. Then I must add another \$50 for the city clerk.

Thus the total would be \$300. I would be advised that checks would not be accepted but only cash. They would not give any receipt for the money I would thus pay them.

The day the payment for this adjustment was to be made, the chairman would meet me to escort

MEMPHIS' ROYAL CIRCUS DAY! **MONDAY SEPT. 21**



THE BIGGEST Independent Circus in the World
Positively No Connection With the Circus Trust

Hagenbeck and Wallace


THE ABSOLUTE LEADERS OF THE CIRCUS FIELD!

AND THE ORIGINAL GENUINE HAGENBECK FAR-FAMED TRAINED WILD BEASTS EXHIBITION

MILLION-DOLLAR MENAGERIE

50 FUNNY, FROLICHSOME, FRISKY CLOWNS, WITH A THOUSAND NEW STUNTS AND BURLESQUES

Are coming on the largest, fastest and best equipped show trains that ever rolled into America, bringing the Largest and Most Extensive Array of American and European Novelties and Features ever exhibited by any management.



1,000 People Employed, 50 Cars, 10 Big Water-Tight Tents, 900 Animals, 30 Elephants and Camels

Hagenbeck-Wallace played Memphis, Tennessee in 1908.

me to his home where he would turn out all lights and pull down the curtains like he was making ready for some crime.

Of course I would have \$400 cash on me. On our way to the man's house we would always stop at a bank where I would have to have the money I had with me changed to the same amount but to other denominations than what I had.

This, as the chairman explained to me, was done so they would know positively that the money they would receive from me would not be marked in some manner. They did not seem to care to handle money that may have been marked.

When we reached the darkened room, I would deliver the three hundred cash to them and they would then and there proceed to count it out in fifty-dollar amounts.

Then they would phone the city clerk to give me a circus license for \$100. Making the total cost of the license \$400. Thus according to the ruse, this committee worked for the city, did collect \$100 for its share, each of the committee men received \$50, and the city clerk his \$150, and in the entire deal there would not be anything in writing nor any exchange of any kind of documents.

The circus would get its license for

the minimum amount of \$100, although the license would in reality cost us \$400. The best thing about the whole transaction was that we did not have to issue any passes to any official since each interested party had received \$50 cash. It seemed to be that they all agreed each man could pay for his tickets.

There were several cities in the country where much the same plan of operation was worked, but none worked as smoothly as did the Jersey City plan.

At Memphis, Tennessee, the city required a payment of one thousand dollars to procure a circus license. They had a special officer whose duty it was to see to it that amount was really paid.

According to the city books, the amount to be collected was just an even one thousand dollars for the privilege of operating a circus within the city limits for one day.

As usual I called at the city clerk's office and he read the law to me. Of course I declared the Barnum and Bailey Circus could not afford to pay such an unreasonable amount.

I then asked him to suggest to me the name of some man I might see who could help me cut the amount. He would refer me to the City License Inspector.

I talked to him on the phone and asked when I could see him in his office. He said he would rather not see me in his office but that he would see me at my hotel. The minute he told me he would rather come to my hotel, I felt sure that he and I would get along all right.

We had only been together a few minutes in my room when he asked me how much I wanted to pay. I told him we would pass the town up rather than to pay any more than \$200.

Then without any hesitancy he said he needed a new suit of clothes, and if I would help him get it, he would tell the city clerk to issue us a license for \$200.

I took \$76 out of my pocket and said that would get him a pretty fair suit. He did not hesitate to accept it.

We showed there on our date to immense business.

When I found Memphis on our route the next year I was very anxious to see if the same officials were still in office in Memphis. When I learned that no change had been made I was of course very happy.

I did not lose any time in contacting the same license inspector, and found him still in a mood for accepting favors.

I made him the same offer provided we could pay the same fee for the license.

He then reminded me of the business our show had done there and he thought he should have more out of it. He ended our argument by telling me this time he would not be satisfied with anything less than another suit of clothes and a nice overcoat.

I took \$125 from my pocket and gave it to him. He was satisfied. He then phoned the clerk to give us a license for \$200, the same as the year before.

Now the city books stated clearly, in good English, that the fee must be \$1,000. Just how the license inspector got by with his operation I never knew, all I knew was that the show only paid the \$200, with the approval of the man who should have compelled us to pay the \$1,000. I felt I had earned my day's salary at Memphis.

Prominent people did enjoy vacation with a big circus.

Some men form friendships on the basis that they happen to smoke the same brand of cigar, because they chew the same tobacco, drink the same kind of liquor or play the same kind of cards.

However, Ben Wallace was not one of this kind because he never smoked, was not a drinking man, and did not know one card from another. However, Wallace was a very entertaining man, a good storyteller, very fond of jokes and enjoyed company.

He was so successful in show business that he died worth more than three million dollars, without any debts--this in spite of the fact that he could not write a business letter of twenty words and spells them all correctly.

He became president of the Wabash Valley Trust Co., one of the



Benjamin E. Wallace, (1848-1921) a great showman.

soundest banks of the state of Indiana.

I counted myself as being most fortunate in that I had worked for years with J. A. Bailey of the Barnum show and with Ben Wallace of the famous Hagenbeck-Wallace circus.

Ben Wallace always had two vacant staterooms on his private car, which he reserved for visitors and they were generally occupied. Visitors would come unannounced, bringing their raincoats and rubber boots, prepared for all sorts of weather.

George Ade, one of the best humorists and lecturers of the day, who, though wealthy, and a great traveler, made his humble home in the little town of 1,600 population, Kentland, Indiana, was the most frequent visitor.

One day he would be seen driving a four-horse team in the parade. The next day he would be waiting on the tables in the dining tent or he might be seen washing the dishes in the cookhouse.

He was all over the lot in different positions every day. The workmen on the show did not know who or what he was. They all thought he was

bumming his way over the road with the circus.

He would sometimes sleep in the "tough car" where he would listen to the canvas men telling stories and talk themselves to sleep as they told of their experiences.

In that way George Ade learned the slang and phrases of the follows and their jokes.

There are always a lot of human derelicts with all big circuses. Men who have seen much better days, who had misfortune and bad luck and their conversation in that "tough car" gave George Ade the plots for one of his best human-interest stories.

The Hagenbeck-Wallace circus, the very best circus organization on the road, had the finest group of horses to be seen any place, their horses being one of the advertised features of the show.

With a big circus there is always one hostler for every four horses. The one man being held strictly responsible for the condition and appearance of the four horses entrusted to him. There was always competition in the horse stables as to what or which horses made the best appearance in parade, or in the circus.

There was one black team of eight horses used to pull one of the band chariots in the parade. George Ade was very fond of that black team and would stay several days at a time around that team in the stables, taking care of four of the horses.

One of the four that Ade favored was known as a rosin back. That horse required much attention. Dallie Julian used it in the somersault riding act in the center ring.

Instead of the riders putting rosin on their sandals, the stable men always spread rosin over the back of the horse. As the horse is used in the riding act, this rosin would get rolled into very small pills, hard and troublesome. They may make the back of the horse sore.

And if a rider stands on such a pill in her act, she may cause the horse to

jump out of its routine pace suddenly and throw the rider to the ground. George Ade would spend hours currying this particular horse, brushing and currying it and getting all the rosin off his back after the act.

In the event of such an accident, the audience would not understand and would criticize the rider. Dallie Julian was with the Barnum show when I was, and I recall one day as Mr. Bailey and I were walking down the hippodrome track, in Madison Square Garden, Dallie Julian happened to come out of her dressing room on the way to the center ring and was walking in front of us.

I recall that as she went by Bailey said, "It is worth the price of admission to this show to see that girl walking into the ring." He was commenting on her gracefulness.

Like all French performers, while she was learning to become a bare-back rider, she had to take dancing lessons. All French riders considered that a very necessary requirement.

The next day after his faithful work in the stables, Ade might be taking tickets at the front door.

Among many visitors to the show were Mr. Marshall, Vice President of the U. S. when Wilson was president; U. S. Senator Watson of Indiana; James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet, and publisher of the *Indianapolis News*, who was also the editor of the *Philadelphia Bulletin*.

George Ade (1866-1944), had a stadium named after him at Purdue University.

Abner Jones, the owner of quite a chain of hotels in Indiana, was a popular friend of all with the show, who visited often. He from Crawfordsville, Indiana, the home of Col. Lew Wallace of Ben Hur fame.

Feature writers from magazines and the city press enjoy the rough, and frequently unpleasant, trips with circus life.

I recall one incident when two women from the *Ladies Home Journal*, were sitting one Sunday



afternoon on the show lot. All of us were chattering. Suddenly changing the subject of conversation, one of them asked Mr. Wallace if he could, or would, tell them what particular rule of his business activity he considered the most important, what accounted for his success.

He did not answer immediately, but told her to ask him the same question the next morning and he would try to answer. The next morning came, and the same group of loafers, who had been present Sunday, were sitting with the ladies.

Wallace appeared and did as he had promised. He said the little word of two letters "no" the fact that he always had the courage to say "no," was the factor.

One of the ladies, the one that was most stylishly dressed, remarked, "Well if I had said no one time when I said yes, life might have been different." I later learned that she was a divorcee.

Lions, tigers, compete over animal title "King of Beasts."

It was the first day of a two-day engagement at Indianapolis, Indiana, by the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, the greatest circus city in the country.

The show had left its winter quarters at Peru, Indiana, the previous Saturday, this being the first week of the season. The Gentry Bros. Circus had wintered in Bloomington, and Sipe Bros. at Kokomo.

The state of Indiana was very much circus minded. The state legislature was in session and the vice president of the United States, James Marshall was visiting as a guest, having arrived from Washington, D. C.

His home, however, was in Columbia City, Indiana, about 90 miles from Indianapolis.

The show grounds in Indianapolis, was a huge plot of level ground, covered with a flooring of grass, making it an ideal show lot. It was located on West Washington Street, about six blocks from the state capitol building.

Wallace's beautiful long parade, all just newly painted out of the shops was truly a thing of beauty, over a mile long.

It had just left the show grounds,

the first band chariot being pulled by 10 black horses, hauling a big band of two-dozen musicians with Chet Bronson as director.

They played fast music and played it loud. When the band chariot was within one block of the capitol the big band let loose. Instantly all the state officials from the governor down to their clerks and office help—hundreds of employee—fled out of the big Capitol building and got to the sidewalks, as the band came up.

It was truly a very hasty exodus for all concerned. No rehearsal being necessary, everybody just rushed and all law and decorum were forgotten. Vice President Marshall was caught up in the stampede, and to the street he went with the others.

The *Indianapolis News* published a two-column story, a description of this hasty exodus, and made it very humorous as it described the scene.

The Associated Press sent similar but shorter stories by wire all over the country.

The *News* said that at last reports not all of the legislators had found the capitol again at the noon hour. Thus was the unpredictable publicity unintentionally conceived and put over and worth a great deal to the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus.

I had an afternoon date with some pressmen for the matinee. They were a little late and when they came the afternoon performance had started.

The big menagerie tent was entirely empty and the huge circus tent was packed to capacity. As we were crossing menagerie tent I noticed two lions out on the grounds, walking back and forth in front of the cages, looking up as if they were trying to find a place to go.

They did not pay any attention to us, the only three persons in sight. Every animal man of the menagerie had gone out with the sixteen elephants, which had been lined up at the back door preparatory to entering the arena with the ele-

phants as they made their tournament parade.

It was the rule of this and all circuses, that when the entire group of elephants were taken into the circus arena, there must always be one keeper with each elephant, and thus all animal men were out of the menagerie when these two lions were on the ground.

I happened to notice Cheerful Gardner, the elephant superintendent, standing just inside the circus tent. I called to him and pointed toward the two lions.

He went to them immediately, opened the side door of their cage and they did not lose any time leaping up into the cage.

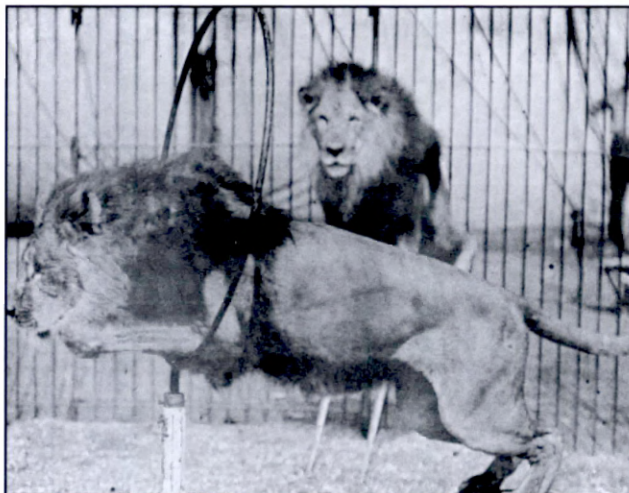
It seems they had accidentally pushed the side door, which had been carelessly left unlocked and had rolled out onto the ground.

When they realized where they were and wanted to get back into the cage, they could not do so, as the door had slammed back into place. They were out and were more scared at discovering their predicament than we men were, thus this incident made the second news story of the day for my newspaper friends.

Which is truly the king of beasts? That has always been an interesting question concerning animals. For some reason or other the place of the King of Beasts has generally been credited to the lion, but there are many animal men who declare that the tiger is really the king.

It is also my own humble opinion that the tiger and not the lion is king.

A pair of jungle-bred lions.



There are two classes of lions. One class, known as the "inbreds" the other as "jungle bred." The inbreds are lions that have been born with a circus in captivity. Whereas the jungle bred lion is the one that was born in the wilds and brought to captivity later in its life.

The difference between the inbreds and the jungle bred is so apparent that anyone can tell them apart.

The jungle bred lion is very dark, almost black tail and very dark, almost black hair in his mane. The mane is much heavier and more majestic looking than that of the inbred.

The inbreds have light brown tails and manes and are not nearly so heavy. Now if the two lions that we saw in the menagerie tent on the ground, had been the jungle bred lions, that story might have had a different ending.

Although there was a cage of inbred lions and a cage of jungle bred lions side by side in the menagerie, it just happened that it was the inbred lion cage door was left unlocked.

There is not a more beautiful more majestic looking animal in any menagerie than the jungle bred lion. With his bushy head of hair expanded, as it seems to be over the entire front of his body, he looks straight at you while lounging in his cage.

He certainly has the look you

would expect from the king of beasts. Whereas with the tiger it is different.

His long, body is close to the ground, almost touches the ground. His head is also down almost to the ground. He seems to have a sort of sneaky appearance, just as if he was ready to leap upon you.

The tiger is some heavier than the average lion, longer and more slender. But it is known that he is more muscular and more powerful than the lion.

Although the lion may make the most picturesque appearance, when it comes to power, shrewdness and stealth, the tiger is known to be far superior.

The lion is, in my opinion, the most beautiful to admire, but the quiet sneaky tiger has the more prominent kingly qualities.

Both the tiger and lion are alike in one respect. Neither one of them are safe playmates after they are a few months old. You may pet them, play with them and fondle them as if they were kittens, but there comes a time when this is changed, and it comes suddenly.

When the little fellow becomes three months of age, you may put him to bed, maybe give him a final pat and wish him a pleasant dreams, and then when you greet him the next morning, you discover something has happened.

Quiet and peaceful the night before, he has become ferocious, unpredictable, he scratches roughly, he bites harder and without any one telling you, you know he is no longer a playmate.

James Michael Curley, the Rascal Mayor of Boston.

I have recently visited the circus when there were perhaps a number of cubs running around on the ground, playful and attractive. Then I returned a few weeks later and ask about the cubs I am told we do not have any cubs now, they have all come into their own.

Boston Mayor loved circuses.

Just a few days ago the

largest funeral seen in Boston, Massachusetts for many years was the occasion of the burial of Hon. J. M. Curley, one of the city's most unique characters.

Mayor Curley, had been mayor of the city for four terms of four years each, a total of 16 years. In that time I had contracted the city for four circus engagements and my official business was of course with Mr. Curley.

We became close friends, had many luncheon engagements and he made me feel at home around the city buildings. I considered Mr. Curley one of the most important personalities I ever had the privilege of associating with in my years of circus work.

I certainly have had the unusual opportunity of knowing many such people. Had I not been so far from Boston on that date, I certainly would have attended the funeral.

Mr. Curley had a truly magnetic personality and almost as soon as you met him face to face you would become an admirer and covet his friendship. Our friendship seemed to be mutual, I certainly appreciated him and he in turn seemed anxious to assist me in every way he could.

One spring when I returned to contract for a circus date, I explained to him the previous spring the circus had been annoyed and bothered by the conduct of some rough boys in the neighborhood who insisted on cutting the guy lines and ropes of our tents.

I asked him for some suggestions as to how a repetition of this could be avoided. He then asked me to meet a certain young man in his office, a high school student, for a personal interview, saying he was sure we could work out an arrangement.

When the young man came, Mr. Curley explained to him that he could depend upon any promise I made. The young fellow then told about a baseball league made up of teenagers.

That they had solicited someone with the circus to donate some funds to them the year before, and the request was not only rebuffed but in a very rough way and they were told to stay away from the circus. Of course the boys had approached the wrong person, but did not know it.



The boys then took matters in to their own hands, cast aside all diplomacy and proceeded to disturb the usual quiet of the circus.

At his interview, when I asked him what he would like to have the circus do, he replied by stating a donation would be satisfactory.

I then inquired if \$100 would be satisfactory.

He smiled from ear to ear and that completed the interview. The circus was not bothered that spring.

The city owned a piece of ground that circuses liked to use. The next spring I had one of our agents in Boston to contract for that lot while I remained in New York attending to railroad contracts.

The man had been in Boston for a week, and had not been able to secure the ground. He phoned me every evening and it was the same story every day he had not been able to see the mayor.

The city owned the ground and the mayor was the only one who had authority to issue a permit for its use.

The city however was not allowed to make any money on the use of the ground.

After a week had passed I phoned Mayor Curley to inquire if I could see him the next day. When I told him I would call early the next day and would enter his office by the back door. When I arrived, I went to his office at the city hall, entered by the back door and found him there.

I explained that I had an agent there for a week, trying to contact him and told him all the circumstances, as I knew them.

The Ringling circus was planning to show Boston, which I already knew and that their agent had been smart enough to influence the Mayor's private secretary and he kept our agent away from the Mayor, so that he could not secure the permit.

This young secretary did this by telling our agent that the mayor was out of town and not accessible. Just how the Ringling agent had prevailed on the secretary to follow his orders, we never knew.

However, the secretary lost his job and I got the permit we wanted without any trouble.

I had intended to remain in Boston

until the next day, but was suddenly called back to New York. It was late at night when I received the wire.

The permit had been written out but not signed by the Mayor. I phoned his residence, explained my predicament, that I had to, take a midnight train for New York but wanted his signature on that permit before I left.

He told me to come right out to his house, saying, "You will find me in my pajamas, but they are new and will not be hard to look it."

R. M. Harvey, contracting agent for Great Wallace in 1900.

Of course I went out and we sat on the side of his bed for some time swapping circus stories. He signed the permit. That was just one of the many incidents that happened between us that helped to bring us close together.

The city could not charge us for the ground but we could donate money to any cause we wished. However, I agreed that we would make the donation of \$100 per day to the mayor and he could donate it as he wished.

One spring I found the mayor in jail, serving a term of six months. He was still mayor and was in jail of his own accord. His lawyers wanted him to appeal the case, but this he would not do as he said if it were appealed it would hang fire for months in the courts, and he preferred to serve the time and have it over with.

There was a poor, worthy young man seeking a job in the local post office and he had to pass a certain examination. Mayor Curley knew the person could never pass the examination, so he acted for him. In some manner he secured the papers, filled them out and answered all the questions correctly.

All the young man had to do was to sign the paper swearing that he had filled it out. He got the job, in some way the information got out that he had not answered the questions but that Curley had acted for him.

Thus he secured the job illegally and Curley was convicted in federal

court for conspiracy and served the six months. In the meantime he was running for reelection again and conducted his campaign from his office in the jail. Helping the man get his job did not seem to hurt him. The largest majority he ever received elected him again for mayor.

Mayor Curley was very circus minded. The circus always remained one week in the city and during that week Curley would become a regular fixture on the show lot and every one with the circus would become acquainted with him.

He would visit all departments, meet all the men and women and joke with them. He did not allow any city official to ask for passes and did not want any for himself. He just walked around as if he owned the show.

Mayor Curley was elected to one term as governor of the state, after being mayor for 16 years, and he was elected to Congress for three terms.

While he was in Congress he was convicted for some illegal infraction of a federal regulation, the outcome of a lawsuit against a company in which he was a stockholder, and as an officer he was sentenced to two years in the county jail again.

He did as before and would not allow his case to be appealed, but had his sentence commuted to a shorter term and then served the time.

Circus people of all ranks always enjoyed the date in Boston because it was the home of affable, genial J. M. Curley.

Edwin O'Connor in his book, *The Last Hurrah* ascribes the following eulogy to Skeffington, who was impersonating Curley.

"Who had lived a long life, to have left the lot of many of those around you a little bit better than it once was, to have been genuinely loved by a great many people, and to have died in God's good grace is no small thing to have happened to any man."

The Last Hurrah a vivid portrayal of the life and career of Mayor Curley, was listed as one of the "best sellers," and is now an attractive and informative movie film.



Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART THIRTY-FIVE

By David W. Watt

Editor's note. The dates listed are the dates the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Daily Gazette.

May 12, 1917

It was along near the close of the season of 1886 that I had a long talk with Adam Forepaugh about the coming season in which I had told him that I thought the work in the ticket wagon was too much for one man and that if he could get a bookkeeper who would answer the correspondence and attend to forwarding the money to the different agents ahead of the show, I thought there would be plenty of work for me after that part was given to the general bookkeeper. Mr. Forepaugh said he had a man in mind and had spoken to him last spring; that he was a bright, smart young man who had been connected with the best theaters here in Philadelphia for several years. It was along about the middle of the winter that I received a letter from him saying that he had secured the services of the young man that he had spoken to me about and that my work would certainly be much easier the coming season.

When I arrived in the spring I had a desk fixed for him in the other end of the ticket wagon where he had ample room for his work and he seemed to take to it as though he had always been in the business. He was well educated, a beautiful penman and expert bookkeeper and in every way well fitted to fill the position. But it wasn't very long until all the spare time that he had was put in the dressing room where he listened to the frontier stories told by the different cowboys who were connected with the Wild West part of the circus. He was soon buying skintight, high-heeled boots such as they wore, belts

which held a hundred or more cartridges and one of the typical western hats almost as large as an umbrella. As his business took him to the express offices and banks everyday, he could be seen in a wild west saddle on a broncho going to the express offices and the banks and had the appearance of a typical cowboy of the frontier days. All his spare time after that was spent with the cowboys, practicing target shooting and taking part with them in all their outdoor sports.

With these surroundings he soon got to drinking and neglecting his business in the wagon, and it was many times that I called him on the carpet and told him he was making the mistake of his life.

But this was only good for the time being, and while he promised me that he would get away from it and spend more time in the ticket wagon looking after the business which he was supposed to attend to but which

he was neglecting, it was all to no purpose.

The following spring when the show opened in Philadelphia, he was back in the wagon after making all kinds of promises to Mr. Forepaugh that he would keep away from the wild west department and attend strictly to business, but it was only a day or two until he was missing from the ticket wagon and was drinking and neglecting his business until Mr. Forepaugh threatened to discharge him. Yet this did no good. We showed Philadelphia two weeks, went from there to Baltimore for three days and then to Washington City for three days. The day we arrived in Washington City I woke him up and told him I wanted him to go with me to breakfast and then to go right up to the show ground and stay in the ticket wagon which would be the only way for him to make good, and that if he did not, I knew that Mr. Forepaugh would let him go. But he refused to go to breakfast with me and along about 10 o'clock in the morning, while the parade was out, a messenger boy came to the ticket wagon and handed me his keys and a note from him in which he said that he had spent considerable of Mr. Forepaugh's money and that he couldn't come back and face him and that if we cared to look for him that we would find his body in the Potomac River. As I had turned about \$20,000 over to him, Adam Forepaugh and I, when we opened the safe, expected to find his accounts possibly several thousand dollars short, but instead of that they were only a few hundred dollars short. Yet after this if he had shown up and showed any disposition to do what was right, he would have been forgiven and put back to work. But it was several days before we heard

Adam Forepaugh pictured on his 1878 route book. Pfening Archives.



from him, and the first word we got was from Mike Coyle, the railroad-contracting agent, who wrote me and asked me what the bookkeeper and treasurer was doing in Cincinnati. Mike said: "I was standing on the platform of the depot waiting for my train when a train pulled out from the depot. After it was forty feet away, I noticed your bookkeeper standing on the rear platform of the last car and he waved his hand to me and yelled at the top of his voice, "Ta, Ta, Mike. I'm for the West."

It was some three weeks later that we showed in Muskegon, Michigan and while I was at breakfast the landlord came in and told me there was a man in the office that wanted to see me. I told the landlord that even in circus business we had to have time to eat our meals and that the gentleman would have to wait until I finished my breakfast. "Well," the landlord said, "I think he'll keep, for he is the toughest looking character I have seen for many days."

When I walked out into the office and took a look at him the landlord smiled and said: "You're entitled to four to one, for you have certainly called a turn." For there was my partner and bookkeeper, the filthiest looking tramp I have ever seen, for he had been tramping in the west, riding in coal cars. When I sat down to have a heart-to-heart talk with him, he was the most penitent man that I ever talked to and made all kinds of promises of what he would do if I would only get him back. While I had lost faith in him, I thought if there was a chance left for him, I would take it. There was a barber shop and bathroom connected with the hotel. I walked into the bar shop and asked for the boss, leaving my friend in the office, and took the owner from the tonsorial place and showed him my friend and said to him that I was willing to buy a new outfit from head to foot if he would allow him to take a bath in his place and cut his hair and shave him.

This was done. I bought him his entire outfit and such a transformation I never saw in a person and only that his face showed the dissipation, he looked as good as new. I said to

him: "Now you stay here and I will go up to the show and have a heart-to-heart talk with Mr. Forepaugh and see if I can't pave the way for you to come back and start anew." This seemed to please him, and when I approached Mr. Forepaugh and told him all the particulars, he flew in a passion and said he would not have him around the show under any consideration. "And, Dave, I want to tell you something," he said. "You had better look out for yourself and your own position and let that young fellow look out for himself."

This did not exactly suit me and I was not long in telling Mr. Forepaugh that my position was not worrying me in the least and that I did want him to give the bookkeeper a chance to come back in the wagon and make good. While he made me no answer, Mr. Forepaugh said: "You take our horse and carriage and go down and get him and bring him up to the lot."

As the governor did not object, I was soon on my way after my old friend, but I don't think a-dozen men could have found him. He had evidently struck some friend that he knew and borrowed money enough to purchase a few more drinks. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the chief of police came to the ticket wagon and asked me if my name was Watt. When I told him it was, he said: "Mr. Watt, I think I have your partner locked up down at the jail."

"Well," said I, "if you have him, keep him. I have made my last effort to do anything for him." When I told the chief what I had done he said, "There is no use in your going any further with him."

That was the last seen of him until about two weeks later when we were showing on the lakefront in Chicago that a hand was reached around the corner of the ticket wagon and a voice that I knew well said: "Give me two dollars or I will jump in the lake."

I immediately told him that if he would jump in the lake I would give him ten, but if he did not jump in, there was nothing in it. But my good wife, who happened to be in the wagon at the time, knew the voice and in a few seconds was out and took charge of him. As he had been

tramping for more than two weeks in his newly purchased outfit, he looked nearly as bad as he did in Muskegon, Mich. He told my wife that he had nothing to eat practically for two or three days and she marched him down Madison Street, took him into a first-class restaurant where the two had dinner together. He was certainly something of an attraction and everyone seemed to take a look at him. Later she took him to a hotel, got him a room and told him that we would call for him in the morning and take him to breakfast with us and see that he got fixed up again, for he had promised to do everything that was right if he only had one more chance.

While we never saw him after that some three weeks later I got a letter from the landlord in Chicago saying that the Good Fellows' Club of Chicago had taken him in charge and sent him to his home in Philadelphia.

What became of him after that still remains a mystery? Although I had turned him down abruptly many times if I could have found him again, I should still have gone farther to try and reform him. When he was right, there was no better fellow.

His name was Charles H. Brooks. A good fellow but took the wrong road.

May 19, 1917

A few days ago while visiting with a man in the corridor of the hotel, he said: "Dave, I spent the day some two weeks ago in Baraboo and was shown through the winter quarters, and although the show was exhibiting in Chicago at the Coliseum at the time, there were many things there to see that would interest an outsider."

"One thing that looked strange to me was that while at the depot unloading a car of baggage intended for the Ringling show, when the train pulled into the depot the big six-horse team belonging to the show got frightened and tangled up. One of them, evidently a green one in the business, threw himself, and to an outsider it looked as though there would surely be a runaway. Yet when these horses were acting the worst, although there were ten or a dozen of the big husky workmen busy unloading the big wagon, no one seemed to take hold and help the man who was



on the seat holding the lines. One traveling man ventured to say to these men, 'Why don't you take hold and help that man handle that big team?' But the workmen, he said, simply gave him a look which seemed to say 'We are attending to our business and you attend to yours and everything will come out all right.' The man on the high seat who was holding the lines did not seem to worry about the outcome and always had the horses under control as well, possibly, as though half a dozen of the workmen had tried to help him out."

There is nothing that disgusts a big team driver so much, if he is high class, than to have someone try to help him when his team is in a mix-up. I recollect once with the Burr Robbins show about daylight in the morning I pulled out to pass an eight-horse driver when I noticed one of the horses plunging and kicking and finally got one leg over the pole. The driver was an old-timer by the name of Dick Waterman and when I asked him if there was anything I could do to help him out, he gave me a bad look from under his broad-brimmed hat and said in a gruff voice, "Yes, if you've got any business of your own to attend to, keep on going, for I am capable of looking after this outfit myself."

From that time on I never interfered with a big team driver no matter how bad a mix-up he might be in.

A few days ago I received a letter telling me of the death of an old friend with whom I had traveled for several years back in the eighties with the old Adam Forepaugh show. His name was Charles Seeley and for many years, when not in the business, he made his home with his sister, Mrs. James W. Straight of Elmira, N. Y. But few people knew Charles Seeley better than the writer, for although he was a performer for several years in the ring and a high class one, later in life he was connected with the management of the show in different capacities. He was a good adjuster with the show, for Seeley was honest as the day was long and when adjusting any misunderstanding that came up between an individual or the show, he was always as ready to give as to take and was a high class gentle-

man as you would meet in any kind of business.

Seeley was a clown in his early days in the business when a clown with the one-ring shows had to do much of the entertaining, for he was a good singer and one year made quite a name for himself by singing a song entitled *Always Turn to the Right*.

One afternoon just after the close of the show I walked back in the dressing room and Seeley and another performer were having a dispute over some trivial matter. It seemed that a short time before Seeley had a distant relative who got into trouble and was arrested and put in jail. The performer, with whom Seeley was having the dispute finally said: "There is one thing, Charlie, that I can say. I never had a relative who got into trouble and was arrested and put in jail." Seeley took a look at him and said: "Possibly that is so, but the chances are that you've got as many relatives in jail as you have in the U. S. Senate."

Seeley was born in Horseheads, N. Y. seventy-one years ago and spent most of his life in the show business. With Sam Shappe, an acrobat who died about a year ago, and other lads, he learned to tumble and do acrobatic stunts. When in his ninth year he had become an expert tumbler and adept at all sorts of ground acrobatics. Frank Phelps, well-known showman who passed away some years ago, secured Shappe and Seeley together with a third and with himself formed a quartet and went into the circus business as postures and tumblers.

As an acrobat Mr. Seeley was famous among the early circus men. He went out as a youngster with John Murray's show and was later with the Cooper & Bailey show. After he became too old--about his thirtieth year--he had to give up as a performer and took to clowning. As a clown he gained much fame in the days when the one-ring shows had only one jester, who was a real clown who could sing, pantomime, follow the ringmaster around in mimic style and make a speech. He was a clown with the Adam Forepaugh show and also with Sells Brothers. Then he

became at times advance agent, manager of the dining tent, boss of the sideshow and adjuster. His last connection with the show business was a position in the booking end of the Keith vaudeville circuit.

When Barnum's show went to England years ago Mr. Seeley went along and there became acquainted with William Burke, a famous English clown, father of Ethel Seeley Burke, otherwise the noted Billie Burke. He had been all over the world in every important country where a circus could find patronage and he had friends everywhere, especially in the profession.

Mr. Seeley was a Mason of high degree, from the blue lodge all the way up. He was a life member of Mecca Temple No. 1 of the Mystic Shrine in the oasis of New York and a paid-up life member of all bodies including the creator of thirty-second degree men. He was an honorary member of Lode of Perfection in Ireland. He never married.

The funeral was held on April 30. Burial was made in Woodlawn cemetery at Elmira with full Masonic honors. John Comosh officiated as worshipful master at the grave. Mr. Comosh, a former circus man and Mr. Wesley were very warm friends for over fifty years. The services were largely attended and there were many beautiful floral pieces.

My only wish is that when Charley Seeley reached the Golden Shore that he turned to the right.

A few days ago a man past middle age stopped me on the street and asked me if my name was Watt. When I told him it was he said: "Of course you don't recollect me." He told me his name, which I had forgotten and continued:

"We live on a farm six miles from Stoughton and it was back in the days of the wagon show that you and the large man who carried the cane pulled into our yard early in the morning and said you had been driving all night through rain and mud with the Burr Robbins show and wanted to know if you couldn't get some breakfast."

Then I told him that I was the man and that I had told the story of that



breakfast, I thought, in every state of the union since; about the big platter of ham and eggs and the elegant coffee and cream. I told him that Johnny Smith, the leader of the band, was the one who was with me. "And do you recollect, said he, "that father would not take a cent for your breakfast, but I had a sister some six or seven years old and you handed her a silver dollar and told her that was not for the breakfast, that it was just a present for her, and your friend with you said that would only pay for the eggs you ate? I think," he said, "We have taken the *Gazette* for more than forty years and although at the time I was only a boy some one year old, as soon as you commenced giving the *Sidelights on the Circus* and when I read the heading saying you had been manager of the Burr Robbins show, I told mother that I would bet anything that you were the man who stopped at our house that morning for breakfast."

He said his father had been dead for some years but his mother was still living, "and it would certainly please her when I go home and tell her that I had a visit with you in Janesville and tell my sister that you are the same man who gave her that silver dollar."

As Johnny Smith and I had been out in the mud and rain all night helping the big wagons out of mud holes, that kind of a breakfast was worth any amount of money they could ask.

It is recalling instances of this kind that help to make life worth living.

Don't let the weatherman tell you different. Summertime is here and if you don't believe it just listen to the press agent who announces the coming of the great Barnum & Bailey show to Janesville where they will give a parade and two performances on Aug. 8. Save up your dimes, boys, for the greatest show on earth.

May 26, 1917

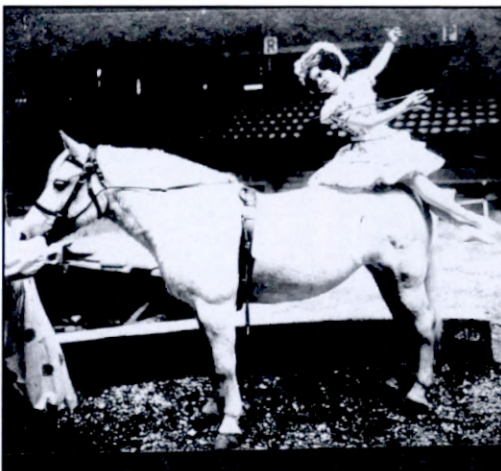
A few days ago I stepped into a business house in Janesville where I met one of the proprietors who was talking to a traveling man. He introduced me to the gentleman, whose name was J. H. Dieter of St. Louis. At this moment the proprietor was called away and Mr.

Dieter and I were left alone for a visit. When I asked him if he had always lived in St. Louis, he said, "No, indeed, I have only lived in St. Louis about twenty years, and as I am past sixty years of age, I spent the other forty years or more in Philadelphia."

When I asked him what part of Philadelphia he lived in, he told me that their old homestead was on Spring Garden Street, near the winter quarters of the old Adam Forepaugh circus. When I told him that I had put in several years as ticket agent and treasurer of that show and knew something about Philadelphia, we were soon engaged in a heart to heart talk of incidents that happened in Philadelphia more than thirty years ago. When I told him that I knew a man in those days by the name of Dieter who owned one of the show places of that part of the city, which was known as Cherry Cottage, he smiled and said: "That was my father and for more than thirty years Cherry Cottage was our home."

It is fair to say that every newsboy and even old-timers in Philadelphia knew where Cherry Cottage was as well as they did the courthouse. It consisted of about fifteen acres of ground and possibly more than 109 cherry trees surrounded the house from which it derived its name. As Mr. Dieter was a great lover of harness horses and a wealthy man he had a half-mile track on the place where early in the morning and late in the evening you could find many

Lulu Davenport, famous lady rider. Pfening Archives.



millionaires driving their fast horses over the track at Cherry Cottage. James E. Cooper of the Barnum show hitched a pair of fast trotters to a road wagon and told me to take a drive and he said that "after you jog them on the streets for at time, you had better drive them to the track at Cherry Cottage, for they are well used to that track and that is where they will do their best work." But to think that Mr. Dieter, the owner of Cherry Cottage, and I should meet in Janesville, Wisconsin after a lapse of thirty years or more, makes you think that the world is not so large after all.

Mr. Dieter said that two years ago he visited Philadelphia for several days and one of the first of his old friends that he visited with was Adam Forepaugh, son of the famous showman, who is living in luxury on Broad Street, enjoying the millions that his famous father made in the business many years ago.

The following article clipped from the *Billboard* about the famous bareback rider, Lulu Davenport, will be of more than ordinary interest to many of the old-timers in Janesville, for the reason that the entire Davenport family were riders with the Burr Robbins show for some two or three years in the late seventies. There were John Davenport, Sr., John, Jr., "Stick," and Lulu, who even at that time were more than ordinary performers in the business.

"Lulu Davenport, one of the bareback riders with the Ringling brothers, is in a class by herself—for two reasons. First, she is an American product, her father being the famous John Davenport, an acrobatic clown rider of renown a generation ago, and her mother, the famous May Hollis, one of the best bareback riders of her time. In other words, this graceful young equestrienne is what might be justly termed, an aristocrat of sawdust world by rightful heritage. The Russian dancer, Pavlova, is famous for her exquisite grace and poetry of motion on the ground, but when a dainty young woman in a fascinating gown executes a pirouette and trips lightly upon her toes upon the back of a fastly moving steed, that is going the famous Russian just one better. Lulu Davenport is

also an originator--a producer--and all winter the greater part of her time is spent planning new acts for the following season. She coached and trained the ladies riding in the Silas Green act, with Ringlings, she herself doubling as an old rube country woman, thereby showing great veracity as the change from a dainty young equestrienne danseuse to a hick character, making good in both is something it requires an artist to do."

George Melville.
Pfering Archives.

Last week George Melville, another old-timer in circus business, passed away at his home in Jersey City. James Melville and Mary Melville, the father and mother of George Melville, came to this country about half a century ago from Melbourne, Australia, both of them being famous bareback riders in their day. Many years ago they were the leading features with the Cooper & Bailey show which was the first circus to make a trip around the world. But thirty or more years ago they retired from the business and bought an unpretentious home on the outskirts of New York City where James Melville and his wife both passed away some twenty or more years ago. It was in March 1887 while we were showing in Madison Square Garden, New York, that my wife and I were invited out to their country home for a Sunday dinner. When we arrived at the station, James Melville, then an old man, greeted us. Turning us around and pointing toward the city he said, "Do you see the top of that skyscraper more than two miles in the distance? It looks as though they were coming this way, and," he said, "mother and I have seen and heard the noise of the city and the circus for so many years that we came out here in the quiet country where most of our neighbors were truck gardeners, went to bed with the chickens and got up in the morning at the same time, and where a loud noise of any kind at night is seldom heard. If the city keeps on

moving this way," he said, "mother and I will sell out and go to the wilds of Montana, but we will keep away from the noise of the city."

It was about nine years ago, which was the last time that the Barnum show was here under James A.

Bailey's management, which their youngest son, Frank Melville,

was equestrian director of the show and my wife and I entertained him at dinner at which we spent much time rehearsing over old days. Of the entire Melville family, the youngest son, Frank, is the only one living.

The opposition brigades have been working their heads off in northern Pennsylvania and southern New York state the past

week or so due to the closeness with which the Barnum & Bailey circus is following the Jess Willard Buffalo Bill Wild West show in that territory. Easton, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton, Pa., and Binghamton, N. Y. are the four cities where the opposition developed the greatest, the Barnum & Bailey show only two days behind the Wild West outfit in Easton and four days behind a Binghamton. The dates for the two shows in the respective towns follow: Willard-Buffalo Bill show - Easton, May 9; Wilkes-Barre, May 10; Scranton, 11; Binghamton, 12.

Barnum & Bailey-Easton, May 11; Wilkes-Barre, 14; Scranton, 15; Binghamton, 16.

In the Middle West several shows have been treading on each other's heels, particularly the Hagenbeck-Wallace and John Robinson Ten Big, with Barnum & Bailey following their billing closely.

Detroit at the present time is literally covered with posters for the three big circuses. The John Robinson Ten Big had the town heavily billed for May 21 and 22, and likewise the Hagenbeck-Wallace for May 29 and 30. The Barnum & Bailey show is partly billed for June 11 and 12.

The following letter from Joe Bartles of Dewey, Okla., who has always financed and managed the Big Round-up annually in that country, will give you something of an idea of the loyalty of the man to the flag.

"There will be no Round-up at Dewey this year."

This is the announcement of Col. Joe Bartles, Oklahoma's leading sportsman, founder and manager of the Round-up, which is annually looked forward to by thousands of citizens of the state as the one big event of the season. It is not financial reasons that is causing Mr. Bartles to omit this year's celebration, as Joe has in the past three weeks consummated a deal whereby he disposed of his entire oil holdings for the very neat sum of \$676,000. This deal did not include any of his Dewey property, agricultural farm, the Bartles ranch or his Canadian holdings, or the ten thousand acres that he owns along the Rio Grande in Texas.

"I believe every person in this part of the country by July will be so wrapped up in doing something pertaining to the great world war that they will have little time for play," said Mr. Bartles. But we will have more round-ups here and the next one at Dewey will be in honor of American soldiers who will have returned from the front after the defeat of Germany. These soldiers will be my guests and Dewey will make them proud that they fought for the grand old flag. I expect this round-up to take place the week of July 4, 1918."

Mr. Bartles is turning every available acre of his vast estate into food and feed production and it is understood that great pressure is being brought by prominent men over the state of Oklahoma to see that he is given a commission in the armed forces to go to Europe, and Joe--well, anyone who knows Joe Bartles; knows he is "roarin" to go.

Word was received a few days ago of the sudden death of Charles E. Kohl at his summer home at Oconomowoc Lake where he dropped dead suddenly being stricken by heart disease.

Charles E. Kohl was the son of Ed Kohl of Kohl & Middleton, and it was with the old Adam Forepaugh show



June 2, 1917

in the late seventies and the early eighties that the father laid the foundation for his millions in the business.

The father was a quiet, unassuming man and a particular friend of mine as we were in close touch in a business way for some years. Charles E. Kohl was thirty-one years of age and leaves a widow and two children. The father died several years ago, and as Charles took up the business that his father founded so many years ago, it is a question who will take Charlie's place and carry on the business in the future.

When the Barnum & Bailey show exhibits in Janesville, the patrons will see something out of the ordinary when Mrs. Hanneford cracks the whip and acts as ringmaster for her two sons and one daughter who are the principal bareback riders of the show.

Helen Hanneford will appear astride her spirited charger in the same ring with her two brothers and her mother. Her mother will wield the long whip to the snapping of which the horses bow and prance. The brothers are riders like Helen.

The mother of the Hannefords was a schoolteacher in an English village five years before she finally answered the irresistible call to the circus ring. The blood of a long line of equestrian ancestors asserted itself. She became the first equestrienne in England and her daughter, Helen, preserves the family tradition.

Clown Peter Conklin.
Pfening Archives.

A friend of mine a few days ago asked me if I ever stopped to think of the difference in the size of the show today and when I first started in the business with Burr Robbins. While the shows of today are many times larger and 1880 was the first year for me as manager of the Burr Robbins show, the work that I had to do at that time was much harder than



Placing Buffalo Bill's casket in his grave on Lookout Mountain. Pfening Archives.

managing any of the big shows of today, for at that time I had to see that the show started out on time in the night and that the last wagon was on the lot in the morning.

Many times I would not get more than three or four hours' sleep at night. The shows of today are better manned with the highest class men in the business at the head of every department and traveling by rail, as they do today, makes the work much easier. At that time very often in the far west we would get but two or three hours sleep at night. Pete Conklin, the clown, once said that many times at night when he would start upstairs to bed, he would often meet himself coming down.



The Burr Robbins show even at that time was not so small after all, for it took 165 horses to transport it over the road and then everybody except the working people stopped at hotels, and about fifty head of the horses were what were called hotel stock.

From 55 to 60 people stopped at the hotels and in many of the small towns we showed in at that time it was difficult to get room for the people.

The following will give you something of an idea of the loyalty to Uncle Sam and the flag of the Ringling brothers.

Through the cooperation of Charles Ringling of Ringling brothers, a widespread campaign of U. S. Navy posters is being made all along the circus route. Not only is the circus putting the paper out by its bill-poster on the advance cars two and three weeks ahead of the play dates, but the Ringling brothers are also furnishing the bills so that the patriotic service to the government and its navy is complete.

The billing used is a handsome one sheet, showing Admiral Farragut standing in the shrouds of his gallant flagship, urging his men and fleet on to victory. Beneath is an appealing inscription to young men to enlist in the navy, the first line of defense, which is now in active conflict with the enemy.

The publicity bureau of the United States Navy, located in New York City, is particularly pleased with this generous cooperation in that circus billing reaches a part of the country and the class of young men who are especially desired. With the systematic and thorough billing facilities of the Ringling brothers, the posters reach a radius of twenty-five to forty miles of the town where the show is to exhibit.

The Ringling brothers have also made arrangements for information booths and tents and recruiting stations on the lots of the Ringling and Barnum & Bailey circuses.

At McKees Rocks, Pa. a fine looking colored man went into the sideshow of the Sparks circus and going over to Mrs. James Harto, who was Kitty Wrenn in the old Robinson show days, called her by name. Colonel Towers happened along at the time and immediately recognized him as Mungo, who for years was his famous Zulu chief with the Robinson show. Mungo, whose right name is Charles Spear, is now a garage manager in Pittsburgh, and wealthy.

June 9, 1917

Many times I have been asked the question, "What year do you consider

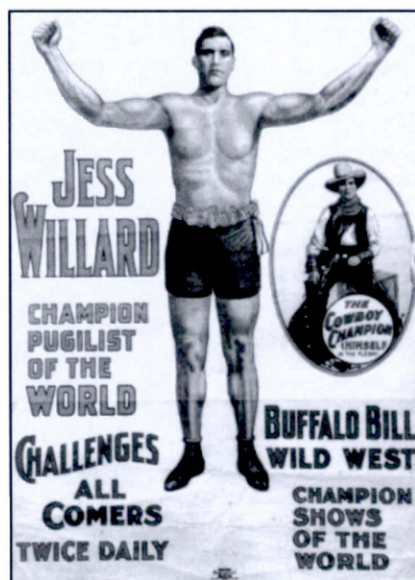
the hardest one that you ever put in the business?" While I cannot recall any easy one, I think perhaps the season of 1880 was the hardest one of all. This was the year that Burr Robbins had the accident when his head was crushed on the Court Street Bridge, which happened the 13th of January. It was not so long after this that the fitting out of the show for the coming season fell upon me, and while the people for the season had all practically been engaged, the show had to be organized. There were about fifty-six people who had to be quartered at the hotel and about the same number of horses at the hotel barn and livery stables. We had a carryall drawn by four horses, which carried fourteen people besides the driver, the Marx family, who had their own ring stock and rode overland in a two-seated carriage. Ans Vanzandt, the jockey rider, and his wife had their own conveyance and the balance of the people rode in three-seated spring wagons. As we showed only in small towns, it was some work to keep the women pleased with their quarters in the hotels that were always crowded to the limit. Every few days some man and his wife would come to me and complain that so and so had been having better accommodations in the hotels than they had and would want to know what the reason was. All these things you would have to adjust as best you could and many times it would seem to me that the work and the worry was breaking about 50-50. The show had been on the road some six or seven weeks before Burr Robbins was able to come, and when he arrived, there were more explanations to make as to why I had not done this and that, until I had to finally tell him that I had done the best possible under the circumstances and that if he had been there himself, I thought conditions would have been about the same. We had struck much bad weather that spring and at different times had to pay out a good deal of money to livery stable keepers and farmers along the road to help us over the terrible roads into the next town. But at that, the show was doing a big business every-where and before the close of the season, it proved to be one of the best years

that he ever had in the business. While with the Adam Forepaugh show later, for about an hour in the afternoon and an hour in the evening while selling the tickets, I was under an awful strain, yet when that was over, I had nothing to worry me unless it was in large cities where the advance sales were heavy and people buying tickets more or less all day long, and that with the bills to be paid and two salary days in the week for about 700 people, this, too, certainly made work enough for one man. So as I said before, I can recollect of no easy season that I put in the circus business, and as I have known the business in every department from the ticket wagon to the dressing room, I can't recollect of any easy jobs around a circus.

The last tribute was paid last Sunday, June 3rd, to the memory of Col. William F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill," by a vast assemblage when the body of the famous scout and plainsman was placed in a vault blasted from solid rock on the top of Lookout Mountain, twenty miles from Denver, Colorado. More than 10,000 persons went from Denver to Lookout Mountain by automobile and electric train.

The ceremony at the grave was simple. The Masonic ritual was read and a delegation of Knights Templar from North Platte, Nebraska, acted as an escort.

Jess Willard lithograph used in 1917. Howard Tibbals collection.



At the conclusion of the services, a bugler sounded taps. Colorado national guard artillery fired a salute of thirteen guns and the stars and stripes were hoisted from a flag-pole at the grave.

Last week the Ringling show exhibited in Washington D. C. and it seems as though the president and his cabinet go to the circus and enjoy it as much as do the people from the shops and the farms.

President Wilson looked out across the green lawn of the White House and saw the procession of Ringling Brothers circus going by. The calliope echoed its invitation so the president and his party went out to the big tent. You may wonder how a circus looks to a president. Perhaps the answer may be found in observing how a president looks at the circus. The band played the *Star Spangled Banner*; and the great crowds arose until the piece was finished and the presidential party was seated. A little later it was observed that in the box that had been fitted up for the occasion his august presidency was eating peanuts and cracker-jack and that he and his companions were having as much fun out of the antics of the clowns as was the small boy who had gained admission by having to carry water to the elephants. To prove that the president loves a circus it may be stated that he passed up an invitation to a great gathering of businessmen, it is said, in order that he might watch the beautiful spectacular performance of Cinderella and see the bareback riders and trapeze performers and the other specialists in fun-making employed by Ringling Brothers big show.

Members of the cabinet and most of congress turned out to see the show and Charles Ringling was called to the president's box in order that he might receive congratulations from the head of the nation upon his great achievement in circusdom. Statesmen are just like other people and all are boys again at the circus. One busy official was heard to say: "There sits the senator from my state. He and I have been telling each other how busy we are."

None of them were too busy to go to the circus and the president and the rest of the officials of Washington

didn't seem to give a rap about the war in Europe during the two and a half hours that they enjoyed seeing Ringling Brothers circus. It is very noticeable that the cares and responsibilities of life slip from men's shoulders when they go to the circus, thereby better fitting them to meet their heavy duties.

June 16, 1917

A few days ago Eddie Arlington sold the Buffalo Bill show to Jess Willard, the heavyweight champion of the world. Mr. Willard was traveling with the show and was the one big feature and under a contract for the season. The show opened early in the season and has been doing a big business and Mr. Willard made up his mind that he would like to own and manage the show himself, and in turn, Mr. Arlington made a contract with Mr. Willard to remain at the head of the show as its manager and general contracting agent. Eddie Arlington is one of the highest-class men in the business and for many years was associated with James A. Bailey of the Barnum show. Mr. Arlington toured Europe with the Barnum show and up to the time of James A. Bailey's death, Eddie Arlington was one of Mr. Bailey's closest advisors. It was only a few years ago that he launched into the business for himself.

Mr. Willard paid Arlington the neat sum of \$105,000, which among show people is considered a cheap price for such a show, which is the largest of its kind in the country. With reasonable success, Mr. Willard should be able to more than dean up the price this season. The show consists of forty-five cars, about 200 head of horses and all the paraphernalia that goes to make up the Buffalo Bill show.

Last Saturday evening a traveling man in a hotel lobby asked me if my home was in Janesville. When I told him it was and had been for many years, he said: "Well, I am a long ways from home and would be only too glad to be there to spend Sunday

with my family. I was born and raised in New York City," he said, and asked me if I had ever been there. I told him that several years ago my business was such that I was in New York for a couple of months every spring. When I told him I was ticket agent and treasurer of the old Adam Forepaugh show for many years, he said, "Possibly you might have known an uncle of mine by the name of George Orrin." I told him that



George Orrin and I had been friends for years and I said I knew his brother, Ned, all through their career as showmen of the highest order in Havana, Cuba.

"My name is Lorenzo Medina," he said, "and George Orrin married my mother's sister."

George Orrin. Pfening Archives.

George Orrin was the older of the two brothers and long about the middle of the seventies, they organized a small show in Havana, Cuba where they met with much success for a few years. Then a company was organized and a large amphitheater was built for them, a structure such as the Coliseum in Chicago, and it was there that the Orrin brothers made their millions. Their circus season would open about the first of December in Cuba and last about four months. Every fall during my stay with the Forepaugh show, George Orrin would come over to this country and usually spend a couple of weeks with the Forepaugh show, engaging people for the winter season. As I had the only stateroom on the train and an extra bed for a guest, George Orrin was always my guest during his stay.

It was along in eight-five or six that George Orrin brought his wife over with him and I found quarters in another sleeper and gave Mr. and Mrs. Orrin my stateroom during their stay.

When Mr. Medina found that his uncle and I had been close friends for many years, he said: "Mr. Watt, I intended to leave tomorrow forenoon for Brodhead, but I am going to stay

over until Monday, for you are the first friend of Uncle George's that I have seen for many years."

Lorenzo Medina and his brother were in the business for some years doing an aerial and bar act, but Lorenzo received a bad fall one day, breaking his right shoulder and arm in two places. This necessitated his doing something else and he went to work in a large dry goods house in New York and for some years has been their representative on the road.

C. A. Wortham, whose carnival company opens here next Monday, is another friend of mine, and although we never traveled together, Mr. Wortham is a charter member of the Showmen's League and always ready to give his time and money for the good of the League. It is safe to say that more of his men belong to the Showmen's League than any other show of its kind on the road. Last year when the showmen's banquet and ball was given at the Astor Hotel in New York, Mr. Wortham sent thirteen of his men to the banquet and paid all their expenses. As their winter quarters are at San Antonio, Texas, the expense was naturally several thousand dollars.

While Mr. Wortham is strictly a businessman while on the road and looks after every detail himself, his friends are numbered by his acquaintance.

A new schoolhouse and temporary kindergarten will be established in Janesville Tuesday, August 31st. The structure forms an important unit of the canvas city, which circus workmen will erect on the circus lot on Milwaukee Avenue. It is the school of the Barnum & Bailey circus.

The youngsters of school age who are connected with the great traveling social aggregation attend daily school exercises and learn daily lessons just as do the other children who live in houses and don't wear tights and spangles.

There are half a hundred boys and girls, sons and daughters of men and women performers or attendants of the circus. Mrs. Emma Talbot, "mother" of the big institution, is their schoolmistress. She organizes her class at the beginning of the season in Madison Square Garden, New York, and gathers her pupils about

her every afternoon when the crowds have left the "big top."

The circus boys and girls--most of them--have another kind of training on their daily schedules. They take their daily physical lesson, for most of them, if not already performing with some one of the numerous families of the rings, stages or trapezes, aspire to be heroes aground and aloft some day. Most of the best riders and gymnasts and acrobats and equilibrists have been reared with the smell of the sawdust continually in their nostrils.

Many of the friends of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Collier of this city will be pained to learn of the serious accident to Mr. Collier during the afternoon performance of the Buffalo Bill show at New London, Conn. on Tuesday of last week.

Mr. Collier was doing a ring act, and as the ring was very soft and wet, the horse slipped and fell, fracturing Mr. Collier's right arm, severing some of the bones being driven through the flesh. He was taken to the Memorial Hospital in that city where he is receiving the best of attention. Mrs. Collier is taking charge of the eight high school horses, which belong to the stables of the famous Rhoda Royal, and is doing the same act that her husband did. She takes a day off to go back to the hospital and look after her husband for a few hours, then returning to the show. This accident will undoubtedly keep Mr. Collier away from the show for some time, but his early recovery is the wish of a host of friends in Janesville.

June 23, 1917

For some time past I have been busy checking up people that I have known in the business for many years who have retired from the business. I find very few of them, no difference how large their bank account may be, that are satisfied to sit down in retirement and fold their arms.

Mrs. Charles Robinson, who by the way was Josie DeMott of the famous DeMott family of riders of nearly forty years ago, received her first lesson as a bareback rider at the ring barn of the Burr Robbins circus in this city.

For more than a quarter of a century Josie DeMott, or Mrs. Charles

Robinson, has been one of the famous bareback riders of the country. Her last appearance in Janesville was with the Barnum show when they exhibited here for the last time under the management of James A. Bailey.

Josie DeMott-Robinson, who used to do a star bareback riding act, is a bubble of ingenuity. Out of the game as a circus performer she has put into operation the corking idea of teaching what she knows to people who have the time and money to pay her for lessons, with the highly satisfactory result that she has daily classes at her Hempstead, L. I. estate in which society women and girls with motion picture ambitions are flocking to absorb the rudiments of sitting upon a horse.

Josie DeMott, lady rider. Pfening Archives.

Her inherent showmanship taught her the value of "dressing her act" and she is using exceptionally good looking riding togs and making a nice round little sum by giving her early training a productive twist.

She rode in a movie the other day, too. Doubled for some actress who refuses to be strenuous.

Another one that I recall and one who many people in Janesville have known for years is the widow of the late Al Ringling who retired from the business something like two years ago.

Although Mrs. Ringling can have everything that money would buy after living many of the best years of her life under the canvas and traveling from one end of the United States to the other many times, to retire from the business and sit down in a luxurious home soon became monotonous and Mrs. Ringling soon bought up several acres of land bordering on Mirror Lake which is located between Baraboo and Kilbourn, where she will spend most of her summer months.

Mrs. Ringling has erected a new pavilion on this property one mile west of Fern Dell, which was opened to the public on June 14 with a grand

opening dance.

Many had looked forward to the opening of this pavilion for the reason that something especially good was expected. Mrs. Ringling has spared no pains to make the pavilion one which will be so convenient and comfortable as to be very attractive.

The pavilion is 32 x 60 feet with an excellent hardwood-dancing floor. It is electric lighted and has a fireplace. The building is so built that it will be comfortable until the late fall, the walls being finished with plaster-board. The windows are screened in for hot weather comfort from insects.

There is an ample stage and 150

chairs so that entertainments can be given. There is an electric piano with latest rolls so that visitors will have musical entertainment. A feature that will be appreciated is the picnic tables and benches on the grounds that are for the free use of anyone desiring such. The best convenience, to fishermen at least, is the lunch department. The kitchen belonging to the pavilion is for public use and those patronizing this may, when desired, have seats on the porch, which is 10 x 44 feet, screened and replete with tables and chairs. There is no doubt about the pavilion becoming popular before the season is well on.

When a circus can put a smile on the face of an Indian that in the business is considered going some. This was done a short time ago in a small town in Dakota by the Yankee Robinson show.

Old Chief Pieface and his favorite squaw, Hole-in-Her-Sock, and the entire Sioux tribe always greet the Yankee Robinson circus with the latest style war whoops at all the Standing Rock agency, South Dakota Indian reservation dates. Many chiefs and warriors have tramped with the Yankee show and Big Chief Buchanan is "some heap show folks" out there.

The Indians now go in automobiles instead of bringing the papoose family in a wheelbarrow, as formerly.



On Decoration Day the members of advance car No. 1 of the Ringling Bros. circus spent the day at Fall River, Mass. Al Foss, one of the best-known billers in the circus business during his lifetime, is sleeping his last sleep in Oak Grove Cemetery in that city. Before Memorial Day the men on the car elected a committee to purchase a suitable memorial. On Decoration Day the members of the car crew were transported to the cemetery in automobiles where a brief memorial service was held at the grave, and a wreath, suitably inscribed, was placed on the mound.

Al Foss was a member of car No. 3 of Ringling Bros. circus during the season of 1915. While in Oklahoma he contracted pneumonia and was taken to a hospital in El Reno where he passed away. A guard of honor accompanied the remains from Oklahoma to his home city, Fall River, where he was buried.

This is typical of all show companies on the road in whatever town they may be showing. If anyone well known in the business is laid to rest in the cemetery it is seldom that they are forgotten. With the Forepaugh show we always took the men and everyone connected with the show marched to the cemetery where suitable services were held and the grave decorated with a veritable blanket of flowers.

Perhaps no one in show business has had a more phenomenal rise than Clarence A. Wortham who has spent the past week in Janesville with his high-class carnival company. Mr. Wortham started in the business six years ago in a very small way and today he owns and operates four of the largest and best managed carnival companies in the country. The company here is called the No. 1 company and next week they go to Green Bay and the following week to Calumet, Mich., after which they take to the big state fairs where they are billed up to late in the fall, their last engagement being at Phoenix, Ariz. Mr. Wortham and his family, consisting of his wife and two small boys, travel with the No. 1 company. A governess travels with them and the boys have their school hours each day, the same as though they were at their home and in city schools.

No doubt Mr. Wortham's success is

largely due to the high-class employees he has surrounded himself with and much of his time is spent visiting the different shows.

Walter F. Stanley is the general manager of show No. 1. Smith Turner is another man who has spent many years in the business and is assistant to Mr. Stanley.

George F. Donovan has charge of the animal department and makes the openings and announcements on the streets. Tim Buckley is equestrian director of the show and is trainer of the horse, pony and dog performance. Mr. Buckley has traveled with nearly all the big circuses on the road for the past forty years.

Clarence A. Wortham. Pfening Archives.

Captain Curley Wilson, who performs a quartet of lions and who is also breaking in a puma to do a riding act, has been training these ferocious animals for nearly twenty-seven years and carries many scars on his person as evidence of his many narrow escapes.

It is safe to say that Mr. Wortham brought to Janesville the highest-class show of its kind that ever paid us a visit and when he leaves Janesville, he will carry with him the best wishes of his patrons.

June 30, 1917

It was away back in 1884 that the great Adam Forepaugh show came west, and by the way, that was one of the best years financially for the show during my time in the business, as the greater part of our receipts at that time were in silver. It kept me hustling everyday to get rid of it, and as soon as the banks were open in the morning, I would make an effort to get Chicago or New York exchange for a few thousand dollars of the silver.

We showed in Waterloo, Ia., that season and, as usual, I made the rounds of the banks there. As good luck would have it, Waterloo had a silver famine and the banks were only too glad to get the silver coin.

After I had taken \$5000 in silver to the largest bank in the city I asked the banker where I could find another bank, and he said, "About three blocks up on the same side of the street." At this second bank I did my talking with an old gentleman, who by the way, was the president of the bank, and he said: "Yes, young man, we are very short of silver and we would like \$2000, but whether or not we will have time to count it today, I cannot tell." I said to the old gentleman: "I put all my quarters and halves in \$250 bags, and the silver

dollars in \$500 bags," and added that I had always been very careful that they were right and that I would bring him \$2000, leave it with him and give him a route of the show for thirty days ahead and he could send me a draft on Chicago for the supposed amount which I would leave all to him. The old gentleman said: "You are certainly fair. Bring your money along and I will give you a receipt saying that the bags contain \$2000 in silver, more or less."

This I did, and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon the old gentleman came to the ticket wagon with a draft on Chicago for \$2000 and said: "Young man, I want to compliment you for that \$2000 in silver. It was not absolutely right in count, but there was not a mutilated coin in the lot." His name was John H. Leavitt, and for years after that, when we showed in Waterloo, John H. Leavitt was always ready to take a few thousand dollars in silver from me whether they really needed it or not, saying, "We will do that to help you out." While I had not heard from Mr. Leavitt in years, I met a traveling man in the corridor of the hotel a few days ago from Waterloo and when I asked for my old friend Leavitt, the man said: "Yes, I knew him very well, but he has been dead for some years." When at different times I offered Mr. Leavitt complimentary tickets for the show in remembrance for his kindness, he always smiled, shook his head and said: "Mr. Watt, I never go to circuses." Mr. Leavitt was an





Lithograph used by Robbins and Colvin Circus. Howard Tibbals collection.

old-time Methodist and did not believe in circuses and lived up to his religion to the letter. I believe without any question that John H. Leavitt has gone to heaven and is occupying a front seat in the bankers' row.

When visiting last week with Mr. Stanley, manager of the C. A. Wortham shows, he said: "Dave, you must have known Charles A. Davis, the press agent for some years with the Adam Forepaugh show, and prior to that manager of Bob Ingersoll's lecturing tours." Then I had to tell Mr. Stanley about the New York and Chicago papers writing Davis' obituary, for he was supposed to have died on a ranch in Texas where he had been for some time to ward off the dread disease, tuberculosis. As Charley Davis and I had been close friends for years, no one possibly was better equipped to write his obituary than myself, which I did, and the *Gazette* found its way to Davis on his ranch in Texas. I soon received a letter from Charley telling me that I would have to wait a while, that he was still on the ranch fighting it out, and as far as I know is still living here.

Mr. Stanley said, "Davis and I had been friends for years, and it was only two or three years ago that one of the big shows was going to show in San Antonio, Tex., and knowing that Charley Davis was on a ranch near there, and at times working in San Antonio taking tickets at a picture show, they wrote him about four

weeks ahead, knowing that he was in financial straits and said: 'Charley, if you will do a little newspaper work for us for the next four weeks, we will give you \$25 per week.' Much to their amazement, Charley Davis wrote them a letter declining to do their work for \$25 a week, which possibly would not take him more than one hour a day, and he was taking tickets at a picture show from 2 o'clock in the afternoon until 10 o'clock at night for \$2 a day. Yet he wrote these people saying: 'As a circus press agent I never was a \$25 a week man and I believe in keeping the quality up and being loyal to the profession.'"

Charley was willing to do outside work for any price that he could get to make a living, but was loyal to his profession, for in his time as a press agent with the circus, he was one of the highest salaried men in the business, and for many years with different shows, his salary was said to be \$100 per week.

It was back in 1881 with the Burr Robbins show that Mr. Robbins sold an interest in the show to one E. D. Colvin of Geneva, N. Y. and as Mr. Robbins and I did not agree on salary, the show left Janesville without me and was on the road some two or three weeks when trouble arose between Robbins and Colvin. They signed an agreement to both leave the show until they could agree on a settlement; that the show was to be turned over to me as manager. The change took place at Dowagiac, Mich. I arrived at Dowagiac on Saturday

weeks ahead, knowing that he was in financial straits and said: 'Charley, if you will do a little newspaper work for us for the next four weeks, we will give you \$25 per week.' Much to their amazement, Charley Davis wrote them a letter declining to do their work for \$25 a week, which possibly would not

evening and put in Sunday taking an inventory of the show so that I might know exactly what I had charge of I found many new people with the show that I had never seen before.

John S. Smith was the leader of the band and that spring he engaged a young man by the name of Jordan of Maple Park, Ill., as snare drummer. It is safe to say that young Jordan was as high class in his business as anyone that Smith ever had in his band, for I noticed that he always had a good word to say for young Jordan, and Smith was not the kind that was afraid to voice his opinion to anyone in the band that did not please him. But I lost track of young Jordan years ago until last week a friend of mine who is traveling on the road chanced to make Maple Park and met Jordan who was not slow in asking if Dave was still alive. He went on and told many interesting incidents that happened with the show back in 1881 that I had long since forgotten.

And so it is that every few weeks someone of the boys knocks at the side door of the ticket wagon and asks if the ticket wagon man is still alive. Keep on knocking, boys, for these are pleasant memories.

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